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October 13, 1979 $1

EDITORIAL

THE CUBAN NONCRISIS

In his speech last week on the discovery of Russian "combat" troops in Cuba, President Carter strove presidentially to extricate us from the dilemma he himself had helped to create when he said "the status quo is unacceptable." In essence, he had allowed the politicians to saddle him with a nonnegotiable demand. So it was good news that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was nevertheless dispatched to negotiate and that in the end the President defined the issue constructively: "The greatest danger to American security tonight is certainly not the two or three thousand Soviet troops in Cuba . . . [it] is the breakdown of a common effort to preserve the peace, and the ultimate threat of a nuclear war."

The President should be commended for resisting the temptation to win "leadership" points in the polls by converting this nonevent into another Cuban missile crisis.

But this attempt to substitute symbolic politics for policy is fraught with another kind of danger. Carter ordered increased surveillance of Cuba, the Marines into Guantánamo Bay and new naval maneuvers in the Caribbean. American forces in the Indian Ocean will be strengthened and the Rapid Deployment Force will be "enhanced." In other words, even as the President condemned an "uncontrolled nuclear arms race" and found no reason for a "return to the cold war," his discussion of the Moscow-Cuba axis reinforced cold-war images and promised an increased capacity for intervention.

Whether this strategy will buy him SALT II—especially since the Russian troops in Cuba will continue to be exploited by headline-hungry politicians—may ultimately depend less on the President than on the statesmanship of a handful of Senators, including one who has been comparatively silent on Cuban troops but quite vocal on the need for leadership.

DNA BONANZA
Tabitha M. Powledge

THE SAUDI CONNECTION
Peter Achnacarry

ZAIRE GOES BROKE
Wendy Cooper

BARTH'S 'LETTERS'
Philip Stevick

BEDTIME FOR GONZO
Gene Lyons

'GLORIA MUNDI'
Richard Lingeman

THE NEW INTERVENTIONISM

CURING THE VIETNAM SYNDROME

MICHAEL T. KLARE

America's military leaders are girding for the final assault on what they view as the biggest obstacle to U.S. military supremacy: the Vietnam Syndrome. Stated simply, the Vietnam Syndrome is the American public's disinclination to engage in future Vietnam-type interventions in the Third World. While most Americans cheered the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina and the simultaneous reduction in our "police" presence abroad, some American leaders have campaigned ever since to relegitimize intervention as a standard instrument of U.S. policy.

The Vietnam Syndrome has been manifested both institutionally and as a subjective condition. The institutional changes the syndrome produced included: (*1*) passage of the War Powers Act and other legislative restraints on Presidential war-making abroad; (*2*) abolition of conscription and establishment of an all-volunteer service; (*3*) curtailment of covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence agencies, and (*4*) adoption of the "Nixon Doctrine" and the creation of surrogate "policeman" powers.

These developments had immediate and profound consequences for the entire national-security apparatus. The armed forces lost half of their uniformed personnel, thus eliminating future openings for thousands of generals, admirals and other top career officers. The Pentagon budget was reduced (in noninflated, "real" dollars), causing a significant drop in defense contracts. The C.I.A. was forced to undergo an unprecedented public probe of its secret operations, and lost many veteran

(Continued on Page 337)

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LETTERS.

AFFIRMATIVE OR RACIST?

Savage, Md.

Although I am a life member of the N.A.A.C.P. and because I am an unwavering civil libertarian, I have a much different view than does A.C.L.U. staff counsel E. Richard Larson of the merits of the narrow Supreme Court decision in the *Weber* case and the desirability of "voluntarily adopted numerically based affirmative action programs" ["*Weber* and Beyond," *The Nation*, July 28-Aug. 4].

I guess I'm not fashionable, but I don't divide humankind into "blacks" and "whites." In my view, these simplistic categories are racist inventions and have no scientific validity. Each of us is entitled to equal rights under our Constitution and none of us should ever be discriminated against on a racist basis. Yet that is exactly what the proponents of "black" and "white" race-conscious quotas would have us do. Where is the concern for individual equality of opportunity in such programs? Obviously it is not there.

The advocates of these devices would treat human beings like pieces of differently colored wood to be manipulated and maneuvered mechanistically toward the "great" goal of assuring a "perfect" ratio of "blacks" to "whites" in jobs, schools or wherever. I wish there were a quick, easy *and fair* way to overcome the disadvantages caused by the kind of discrimination practiced by the racists of old. But there is not. And I submit that conscientious civil libertarians should not be supporting the "any means to the end" philosophy.

Indeed, we can and should be pushing for stringent enforcement of existing antidiscrimination laws. I would also urge support for new legislation to provide decent housing, jobs, schools and health care for low-income people. But we should *never* treat people differentially on the basis of their alleged race.

Kenneth A. Stevens

HYPE EXPOUNDED

Glen Cove, N.Y.

Richard Gilman ["Notes on Literary Hype," *The Nation*, July 28-Aug. 4] may be right in saying that "the word 'hype' derives from 'hyperbole,'" but that is only a matter of relationship, not etymology. I believe he would find that the current use of "hype" derives from the *Variety* coinage of "hypo" (as in hypodermic), meaning an extra effort made to bolster the business done by a movie, "giving it a shot" or "a needle." Hypo very soon degenerated into hype, since some people obviously realized that "hypo," meaning "under," did not sit well with boosting or raising.

I think his historical references to usage of hyperbole are farfetched. Exaggerated honest evaluation of an event (even in the mouth of Richard Nixon) is not "hype" in the commercial sense in which it is now being used.

As for Mr. Gilman's disquisition on the critical appraisals given of so many novels these days, isn't he really beating a long-dead horse? In 1927 (at age 16), when I wangled somehow an interview with Theodore Dreiser (never printed, but it did lead to my first professional assignment), he expressed to me exactly the same sentiments about the "masterpieces" that the then reigning book reviews of the *Times* and *Trib* discovered every week, or at least every month. . . . *Harold J. Salemson*

PRESS & THE BENCH

On October 13, *The Nation*, New York Law School and the American Society of Journalists & Authors are co-sponsoring a conference at the law school on judiciary-press relations. Four seminars, chaired by Victor Navasky, including panelists Aryeh Neier and Dorothy Samuels, will explore such issues as the apparent conflicts between 1st and 6th Amendment rights. Registration fee of $10: RSVP Holly Redell (212) 997-0947-8.

A RAPE IS A RAPE

Burlingame, Calif.

In the June 30 issue of *The Nation* Herman Schwartz used the term "homosexual rape" in his article on the *Wolfish* case, "Bad Time in the Bail Jail."

Is it important to point out that prison rapes involve people of the same sex? Does that make a sexual assault any worse? Would your editors normally distinguish, say, interracial rape in a context like this?

We are concerned that people less scrupulous than *The Nation* will use the term "homosexual rape" to whip up hatred of us by evoking images of homosexuals terrorizing the prisons. As you know, usually we are the victims of these assaults, not the perpetrators of them.

I've read that the National Gay Task Force has got the Bureau of Prisons to consider using another term. Could *The Nation* also switch to something less easily twisted? Wouldn't "sexual assault" meet your needs well enough? Or even just plain "rape" without an adjective? *William T. Ingersoll*

THREE ON MOYNIHAN

Roslyn, N.Y.

Cheers for your September 22 issue on mountebank Moynihan. One wonders whether *Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger would still choose him over that great woman, Bella Abzug, or whether he might now say, "better pink than fink." *Nathaniel S. Lehrman, M.D.*

Cheyney, Pa.

As a liberal reader of *The Nation* for many years, I was dismayed to see Ronald Steel say that Patrick Moynihan's foreign policy views are "somewhere to the right of the John Birch Society" ["Peck's Bad Boy," *The Nation*, Sept. 22]. As a former editor, I know reviewers have wide latitude, but it's sad to read such mindless, malicious stuff in *The Nation*. . . . *Charles C. Walker*

Silver Spring, Md.

To *The Nation*'s catalogue of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's sins should be added his crusade for massive Federal aid to parochial/private schools by means of tuition-reimbursement income tax credits, and his vicious attacks on all who oppose his plan.

His tuition tax-credit plan would favor the more over the less affluent, violate church-state separation, wreck public education and divide children along religious, ideological, racial, class, "academic potential," sexual and other lines.

Fortunately, both a majority of Democrats in Congress and President Carter recognized the Moynihan scheme's folly and unconstitutionality and blocked it last year. Unfortunately, the same plan is being revived by initiative petition in California and may go before that state's voters in June 1980. *Edd Doerr*

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CONTENTS.

Volume 229, No. 11

COVER
Editorial: The Cuban Noncrisis
The New Interventionism:
Curing the Vietnam Syndrome *Michael T. Klare*

LETTERS
322

EDITORIALS
323 Getting the F.T.C.
324 Disabling the Law
324 James Baldwin—A Reply *Leonard Kriegel*

ARTICLES
326 Who Owns Life?:
DNA Research
Gets Down to Business *Tabitha M. Powledge*
327 Time for an Oil Change:
Breaking the Saudi Connection *Peter Achnacarry*
331 *Weekend* Update:
A Visit From the Gulf Truth Squad *James Gannon*
333 How to Carry a Nation:
Zaire's Primrose Path to the Poorhouse *Wendy Cooper*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
341 Barth: Letters *Philip Stevick*
342 Thompson: The Great Shark Hunt *Gene Lyons*
342 Of Silence (poem) *Wayne Dodd*
346 Clark: Gloria Mundi *Richard Lingeman*
349 Indigenous Music *Nat Hentoff*

Drawings by Isadore Seltzer

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EDITORIALS.

Getting the F.T.C.

They celebrated Christmas early on Capitol Hill this year. A House subcommittee passed a "Christmas tree bill" last month with gifts for just about every corporation or trade association under the sun that has a gripe against the Federal Trade Commission. Specifically, the House appropriations subcommittee adopted a forty-five-day funding resolution that prohibited the F.T.C. from undertaking "any new activities," such as issuing rules or launching investigations or pursuing litigation. Unaccustomedly modest, the subcommittee kept its beneficences quiet: only the members and a few lobbyists were present. Nonetheless, it was a blatant example of the Balkanization of the House by special interests and single-issue groups.

The Appropriations Committee adopted its subcommittee's resolution, and the F.T.C. was left to operate under the contingency funding resolution for the next forty-five days. The House restrictions on the F.T.C. were subsequently swept away in the general budget pandemonium, but never fear, lobbyists. The Senate Commerce Subcommittee is now holding hearings on the F.T.C., before which a parade of representatives from business have appeared to castigate the commission. The best guessing right now is that the Senate will go about eviscerating the F.T.C. in a more genteel way—either by narrowing its enabling legislation or by a "legislative veto" proposal. The latter will enable Congress to accomplish slowly and deliberately what the House appropriations subcommittee did in one whack, i.e., repeal behind closed doors F.T.C. regulations that businessmen don't like.

Back in the 1960s, the first report by Nader's Raiders appeared—on the F.T.C. The image that has stuck in our mind all these years is the commissioners' practice in those days of taking frequent naps to fill their empty afternoons. Chairman Michael Pertschuk has since stirred the F.T.C. out of its somnolence, and it has taken on conglomerates, the oil companies and other large and powerful interests. It is instructive to note that the eighteen new F.T.C. rules passed or in the pipeline, which the appropriations subcommittee succeeded in suspending, were actually written under the Nixon Administration, and have been refined and focused under Pertschuk—hardly the depredations of a wild-eyed

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antibusiness fanatic. Still, it all goes to show that the special interests—and their Congressional errand boys—will only be satisfied with no regulations at all.

Disabling the Law

Hard pressed to keep the Proposition 13 faith in the face of a rising deficit, the House of Representatives last month found a suitable target. It passed a bill to reduce benefits for the weakest and neediest of Social Security recipients—the disabled. The Senate Finance Committee opened hearings on the subject this week. Reportedly, Chairman Russell Long favors even more drastic reductions. Unfortunately, the public and press know little about the program and the people it covers.

Enacted in 1956, the Disability Insurance program pays Social Security benefits to those working at jobs covered by Social Security who become unable to engage in "substantial gainful activity" owing to physical or mental incapacity. A person does not qualify if he or she retains the *theoretical capacity* to perform a job that exists *somewhere in the national economy*, whether available to that particular person or not. The thousands of denials of claims by the Social Security Administration attest to its hard-nosed stewardship.

Moreover, the disabling condition must have existed for at least five months before benefits can be authorized. During that time, the claimant cannot collect state unemployment insurance because such programs stipulate that the applicant be able to work. No other program assures income during the waiting period. And with job loss, the individual's medical insurance usually disappears. With such a grim gantlet to run, anyone who *could* work is quite unlikely to seek Disability Insurance benefits. The individual benefits are far from munificent, averaging $240 a month—or about $8 a day; the maximum for a family is $600 a month.

Yet former Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano, a proponent of benefit cuts, argued before the House Ways and Means Committee that "[D.I.] benefits *often* equal or exceed pre-disability earnings." A few pages later his statement declared that "*a small proportion* of [D.I.] beneficiaries receive benefits so high that the benefits, *in effect*, serve as an incentive not to go back to work" (emphasis added). Such figures are grossly misleading: they are based not on earnings when able-bodied but on the disabled person's average *credited lifetime earnings*. For much of the 1950s and 1960s, base earnings credited for Social Security were limited annually to $4,800; only within the last few years has the creditable earnings ceiling been raised substantially. So, the figures used by Califano compare D.I. benefits with the lifetime *credited* average—which may be further lowered by periods of unemployment, illness and for many, absence or partial absence from the labor market to tend children and ill family members. Thus the argument that some receive more in benefits than prior earnings collapses, and with it the argument that overly high benefits *must* induce malingering.

The House-passed bill's "cure" for these imagined abuses is to put a "cap" on benefits: 80 percent of the credited average wage or 150 percent of the disabled person's primary benefits (a fraction of the credited average wage), whichever is lower. Califano and the bill's supporters argued that lowering benefits will provide the disabled with incentives to engage in rehabilitation training and to take jobs. That argument overlooks the fact that beneficiaries really *are* disabled. Studies show they are older people, with little formal education, who mostly performed physical labor and who are thus most completely disabled by physical maladies. And the record of rehabilitation training shows that an infinitesimal fraction of those undergoing it actually can return to substantial gainful employment.

One must understand the politics of the situation. Higher Social Security payroll taxes impend under existing law. Only over the past few years have middle- and upper-income earners felt the bite of the payroll taxes. They've been screaming. Congressmen responsible for the 1977 tax boosts are desperately trying to trim program costs in order to grant some payroll-tax reduction. They ignore the $15 billion in tax revenues that are lost, according to the Congressional Budget Office's estimate, through deductions allowed for private pension plans, which favor upper-income earners. Cutting these tax reductions would make possible a general revenue contribution to the Social Security fund. Instead, Califano, the White House and some Congressmen have targeted the weakest members of society—the disabled. In the process, they will reduce the potential value of Social Security to everyone. MERTON C. BERNSTEIN

Merton C. Bernstein is Walter D. Coles Professor of Law at Washington University in St. Louis. His book-length study, "Disability in the United States," is near completion.

James Baldwin—A Reply

"Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools."—Auguste Bebel

Like James Baldwin's father, my father was not a success—not, at least, as that word is usually defined here in America. Unlike Baldwin's father, however, he was not a preacher. For my father, as for all immigrants from the Eastern European *shtetl*, Christ was simply someone whose existence had created one more threat for Jews to overcome. My father's perceptions were limited, both by culture and by his inability to feel at home in America. But he understood that we were not a people who could afford the luxury of being "born again" (James Baldwin, "Open Letter to the Born Again," *The Nation*, September 29). Sharing the elder Baldwin's sense of displacement, my father would have felt a kinship with the man whose life and death are so movingly portrayed in *Notes of a Native Son*. But he would have been

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amazed that a man who had suffered so much could so fervently desire to be born again.

He would certainly not have been amazed at being told what he should pray for on Rosh ha-Shanah by Andrew Young. In my father's world, Jews were invariably being told what to pray for and how to live. ("That," I can hear his ghost saying, "should be the least of our troubles—that they *tell* us!") Unlike his agnostic sons, my father took these Days of Awe seriously, and I suspect that he might have been secretly pleased that a minister understood their significance.

But my father would also have recognized that Andrew Young and Jesse Jackson and even James Baldwin were merely black variations on a disease with which he had been condemned to live all his life—the disease of telling the Jew who he is and how he is to live. The white and liberal and sometimes Jewish readers of *The Nation*, among whom my father's two sons are numbered, have a more difficult time in understanding this. After all, they have been weaned on the idea of black-Jewish cooperation. Most readers of *The Nation* have at least a sentimental allegiance to what we still euphemistically call "the Third World." American blacks are considered part of that world, as are their African brethren. And as are the Palestinians, whose cause Baldwin and Young have so fervently embraced. But Jews? Well, the Jews are "Zionists," a word that now has all the moral opprobrium in Baldwin's mouth of "cosmopolitan" or "racist" or even, God help us, "white."

My father would have been surprised to read that "Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews" but for "the salvation of Western interests," certainly the funniest line ever written by a writer not usually noted for his humor. He knew too much about the "Holocaust" and "genocide" to use those badges. But he might have asked Baldwin to remember history; he might have pointed to those barbed-wire pens on Cyprus behind which the survivors of the Holocaust were kept by those same Western colonialist interests. For my father, Zionism was a necessary, indeed, an honorable fate, inevitable for the Jew. He would have laughed at Baldwin's distinction between Jew and Zionist. He was not verbal enough—not even in Yiddish, which was his language—to term Zionism the most powerful of all "national liberation" movements. But he knew that it embodied the collective remnants of what we Jews were, of our insistence that an entity known as *the Jews* could defy the logic of their extinction as perhaps no other people in the history of this blistered planet had managed to do. Ultimately, it was to be just such knowledge felt in the bone that would force my father's agnostic sons to declare themselves both Jews and Zionists—not because Jews were "beautiful" or because Jews had "soul" (his word was *tam*) or because Jews were "smart," as our non-Jewish neighbors believed, but simply because Jews *were* when the logic of history dictated that they *not be* at all. From both right and left, we had long since been condemned to what one revolutionary member of our tribe termed in another context "the dustbin of history." Simply put, we were the people who did not belong—not to the First World and not to the Second World and, we now discover, not to the Third World either.

My father would not have been pleased to be reminded by Baldwin of Israel's trade with South Africa. Had he been a reader of political magazines, he might in turn have reminded Baldwin of black African trade with South Africa. Nigerian trade, for instance. Or he might have insisted that there were few other African countries which would trade with Israel ever since she had been declared a pariah by such as Idi Amin, that most "progressive" of Third Worlders, ever since, with the smell of Arab oil in its nostrils, country after country pulled up the skirts of its virtue and broke relations with that "imperialist Zionist bastion." Poor Jews! Poor Israel! Pariahs among the virtuous! Despised by such as Spain and Jesse Jackson and the Ayatollah Khomeini and Billy Carter and the Soviet Union and Fidel Castro and, increasingly, by Congressmen from the Middle West who are worried about the price of heating oil in winter. And black Americans, or at least many black American leaders, have grown tired of Israel and have come out full force for their Palestinian brethren.

Baldwin thinks that Andrew Young "has attempted to ward off a holocaust." Maybe he has. One is not quite certain that he has succeeded. But the same old people, apparently, are scheduled to do the dying. Still, my father might have a comment here, too. However unfashionable it may be to *Nation* readers and to James Baldwin, I suspect that he would point out that this time the scenario is different, at least in one particular: this time the Jews, too, have guns.

When all is said and done, I'll have to stand with my father, who never knew, as Baldwin so authoritatively tells us, that among his sins was that "the Jew, in America, is a white man." Had Baldwin written in Yiddish, my father might have told him that such rhetoric in the mouth of a writer is an obscenity, at least when that writer is dealing with the life and death of a people. For my father knew, as his sons were to learn, that Israel *was* "created for the salvation of the Jews" and that one might endure its existence as a state among states—with all of its limitations—*because* it had offered a sanctuary to a people who belonged nowhere else. To link Zionism with racism is obscene, but to write as Baldwin does is even more obscene, for it distorts the history of our century and makes language itself meaningless. My father knew that we Jews had been condemned to live *in* history. And that is considerably different from being born again. For one's memory of that history is of the intimacy of the thing rather than its rhetoric. Perhaps this is what we have in place of being born again.

We Jews are actually a rather provincial people, more provincial than one might expect "cosmopolitans" to be. Yet most of us know that the necessity of Israel is a necessity *only* for the Jews. I suspect that there was a time when James Baldwin might have known that, too. That was the James Baldwin of thirty years ago, who wrote out of the pain and anguish of existence itself: "But just as a society must have a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol. Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew." Apparently you can change the name but not the game. LEONARD KRIEGEL

Leonard Kriegel teaches English at the City University of New York. His newest book, On Men and Manhood, *will be published in November by E.P. Dutton.*

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ARTICLES.

WHO OWNS LIFE?

DNA Research Gets Down to Business

TABITHA M. POWLEDGE

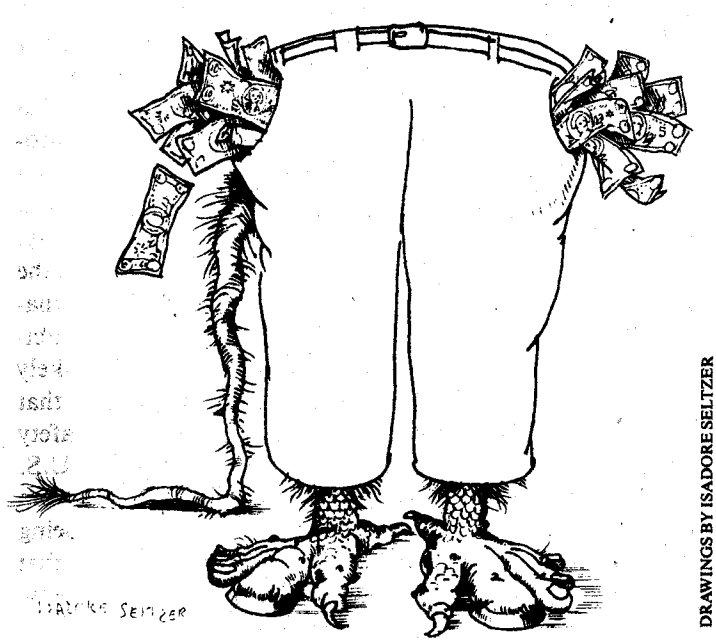
When the Government Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee recommended recently that 80 percent of all recombinant DNA research be exempted from Federal safety standards, the news made the front page of *The New York Times*. But this controversial new form of "genetic engineering," involving an assortment of novel, elegant ways of transferring genetic material from one living thing to another, has been front-page news throughout much of its brief history, beginning with the summer of 1974 when several of the most prominent scientists doing the work publicly raised questions about its safety, and—unprecedented in science—asked their colleagues to suspend experimentation until the risks could be better assessed.

Some of the original worries about recombinant DNA (for deoxyribonucleic acid, the genetic stuff governing each cell in almost all living things) were quite specific. One of the early planned experiments called for inserting into bacteria a virus known to cause tumors in monkeys. What would happen if the bacteria by chance escaped the lab? Nobody knew, but some of the possibilities (a cancer epidemic, perhaps?) were hair-raising. It now appears that viruses may actually be safer when they are grown in bacteria than when they are handled by themselves. But while some of the particular safety worries, such as that one, seem to have been allayed, others have not, which is why almost a third of the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee voted against the exemptions.

Nevertheless, the easing of the safety procedures—which is expected to be approved by the director of the National Institutes of Health—may have some beneficial consequences. It was beginning to appear that the regulations would impose the most onerous burden on those who needed least to be regulated. That is chiefly because the guidelines (which deal in a very detailed way with lab safety procedures and which have gone through numberless drafts in the past four years) were issued by the N.I.H. and, strictly speaking, apply only to recombinant DNA research funded by it (and probably by all Federal agencies, though that was not entirely clear). That means imposing a complex and cumbersome regulatory bureaucracy on academic, but not on commercial, research with recombinant DNA. Yet the field is now being touted commercially as the biological equivalent of the electronics industry of a decade ago. That may be worthy of reflection, as we glance at our digital watches, or balance our checkbooks with our programmable pocket calculators, or play chess with our home computers.

A number of legislative attempts have been made to apply the guidelines to everybody, and many molecular biologists supported such legislation in the belief that it offered a way of imposing uniform safety measures on all the labs, academic and commercial. For the last year or so, though, legislation has been a dead issue. That is due in no small measure to a very effective lobbying effort carried on by scientists, many of them well known and not molecular biologists, who had grown increasingly alarmed by the prospect of greatly expanded Government control of basic research. Regulation of recombinant DNA was seen as setting a horrid precedent for massive Federal snooping—and its attendant paperwork—into all of science. Since it is a tenet of science that freedom of scientific inquiry is derived at least from the First Amendment, if not directly from God, that development was not acceptable and had to be fought.

Industry, though more accustomed to regulation, was none too pleased at the idea either. Its principal objection for the record, however, was that trade secrets would be inadequately protected if companies had to tell the Government everything about everything. That may sound unduly paranoid in such an arcane field, but recombinant DNA research has already accomplished some startling feats, and accomplished them much sooner than even the most optimistic predictions of a few years ago. Bacteria have been induced to make for us two human hormones we have not heretofore been able to synthesize: human growth hormone



DRAWINGS BY ISADORE SELTZER

Tabitha M. Powledge is on the staff of the Hastings Center, Institute of Society, Ethics and Life Sciences, where she does research in the social aspects of science, especially genetics.

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and insulin. The former will probably be important in the treatment of only a small number of growth problems, though it does have certain intriguing research applications as well, but the latter will likely have major consequences for diabetes, a disorder that affects millions and is on the increase. There is also much talk about the prospects for bacterial manufacture of interferon, currently a hot area of research interest because it is a candidate to become the first drug that is effective against viruses the way antibiotics are effective against bacteria.

Those are just a few of the medical possibilities. The applications in other fields—agriculture, for instance—may eventually be much more important. Theoretically, it should be possible to transfer pest and disease resistance from one kind of plant to another. Or to reduce food plants' dependence on artificial fertilizers by giving them the ability to take nitrogen from the air rather than from the soil. Only a small percentage of the fantasies being spun around recombinant DNA need to come true for it to become part of the pantheon of human accomplishment that includes penicillin and walks on the moon.

And that, of course, explains why many of the major drug manufacturers have recombinant DNA research programs going, and why the likes of International Nickel, Standard Oil and National Distillers have already gambled millions on this infant research, backing the handful of small companies that have, themselves or in tandem with academic researchers, moved quickly to exploit the possibilities. Most of the recent achievements have come out of labs with commercial ties. Competition is savage; a priority dispute has already arisen over the human growth hormone. Commercial interests, particularly the pharmaceutical manufacturers, have given public assurances that they will voluntarily comply with the safety guidelines, but one can imagine a certain amount of pressure to cut corners in such an atmosphere with no monitoring or compliance requirements. They are pushing very hard because they believe these techniques can change the world, and, not so incidentally, make the changers immensely rich in the process. Says the vice president of one company, "We're building another I.B.M. here."

One problem with the guidelines all along has been that they give only the *illusion* of security. They offer little protection against unanticipated dangers, nor against the inevitable operation of Murphy's Law. Lab safety measures, even the good ones, are notorious for being breached daily, both by accident and design; smallpox no longer exists in the real world, but it still kills people in its laboratory incarnation. The guidelines will not protect people against recombinant DNA use by amateurs and terrorists, which is unlikely but not impossible. They encourage the zany idea that bacteria need passports to cross national borders; safety measures in U.S. labs obviously cannot protect U.S. residents from falling victim to a pathogen escaping from somewhere else. Finally, one cannot count on them being observed in any kind of clandestine research, even that sponsored by the Government. Although the Defense Department said a couple of years ago that it was not then supporting any recombinant DNA work, the department had a representative on a Federal interagency committee advising on the guidelines, and it is surely keeping an eye on developments. An appalling variety of little nasties can probably be made with recombinant DNA techniques, and there is some dispute about whether the Geneva Convention banning biological weapons would apply to them.

All the talk about the guidelines in the past four years has kept the arguments focused on the relatively narrow question of immediate safety, leaving other important problems sadly scanted. Now that corporate involvement is so apparent, it may be easier to explore more fully some questions that have in the past been seen as side issues: What ought to be the relationship of academic to commercial science? Should so much private profit be permitted, particularly since much of the start-up money came originally from N.I.H. grants, which is to say from the bottomless coffers of the American taxpayer? Can these productive little creatures we're making be patented? Who owns life, anyway?

One of the major effects of recombinant DNA may be what it appears to be doing to the practice of science. Science has been big for some time now, and it's always been hotly competitive. But this is a new kind of bigness and a new kind of competition. It is, among other things, very detrimental to the free exchange of information among researchers, which has traditionally been of immense importance for the functioning of the enterprise. You're much less inclined to tell your peers all about your latest whatsis if the Triple Crown in your particular sport consists of the Nobel Prize, the adulation of a grateful world and a key to the Mint. □

TIME FOR AN OIL CHANGE

Breaking the Saudi Connection

PETER ACHNACARRY

France's economic recovery plan looked very bright at the beginning of this year. It was wrecked by the latest round of oil price increases by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The effect of the added oil expenditures on Brazil has been so severe that President João Baptista Figueiredo has announced a "war economy" to combat them. The 60 percent rise in oil prices so far this year will result in twelve months of economic stagnation in the United States and slower growth in the other Western industrial nations, breeding unemployment, rising inflation and balance-of-payment dif-

Peter Achnacarry is the pseudonym of a Washington analyst who has closely monitored the international oil scene for many years.

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ficulties, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's latest report.

In view of the dire aftershocks of the OPEC cartel's price bombshell, one would have thought the United States would have as its first priority devising a strategy to weaken the cartel. But ever since OPEC imposed a 400 percent price hike in 1973—with severe consequences from which the world economy has yet to recover—the most striking fact about American energy policy is its objective of doing business with the cartel. Have high prices led to a surplus of petrodollars? Then financial mechanisms are found to "recycle" the surpluses of the oil producers through the major multinational banks. Balance-of-payment problems in the United States? Then recoup some of the money by massive arms sales and construction contracts in the Persian Gulf oil-producing states of Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Emirates.

In the post-1973 years when the Shah was in control of Iran, there was the rather comfortable feeling among policy makers of the Nixon, Ford and Carter Administrations alike that the OPEC relationship could be managed to the advantage of the United States. The conservative regimes in Iran and Saudi Arabia would essentially insure stability in the oil-rich Persian Gulf, in close alliance with the United States, the theory went. Four American oil companies—Exxon, Mobil, Texaco and Socal—through their consortium, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), controlled the outlet for 90 percent of Saudi Arabian oil. In partnership with their three other "sisters," British Petroleum, Gulf, and Royal Dutch/Shell, and a smattering of American independents and the French, they also dominated the outlet for Iranian oil. The financial surpluses of Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and Kuwait flowed primarily into the coffers of Citibank, Chase Manhattan and Morgan Guaranty; and Lockheed, Northrop, General Dynamics, Fluor, Bechtel and Koppers got more than their share of the contracts for armaments, civil construction and high technology. The American-controlled marketing of Saudi oil, destined in largest part for Japan and Western Europe, was a sort of geopolitical guarantee that these countries would not stray beyond political limits acceptable to the United States.

Not surprisingly, then, the focus of American foreign policy since 1973 has been pre-eminently concentrated on resolving the one issue that was thought to threaten our mutually beneficial relationships with OPEC—the Palestinian issue—in a manner that would be basically acceptable to the Arabs. If such a resolution could be achieved, in the words of one high-level American official in Riyadh (quoted in the April 8 issue of *Business Week*), then the Saudis would make available at a good price all the oil needed by the United States and its allies.

That is not to say that there were no dissenting voices. In the 1974 and 1975 hearings of the Multinational Corporations Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senators Frank Church and Clifford Case pounded away at the absence of a strategy designed to combat the OPEC cartel. They warned again and again that as soon as economic growth picked up in the industrial world, so long as the cartel remained dominant, economic recovery would be aborted by sharply higher price increases imposed by the cartel as the oil market tightened. In January 1975, the subcommittee issued a report based upon a year of hearings, which recommended U.S. support for accelerated development of non-OPEC sources of oil in such countries as Mexico and Argentina, and in the North Sea. In 1977, in closed meetings of the International Economic Policy Subcommittee (which succeeded the Multinational Corporations Subcommittee), Senators Church and Jacob Javits pressed the new Secretary of the Treasury, W. Michael Blumenthal, to give priority attention to a review of American policy in the Persian Gulf and the need for a strategy to undercut the power of the cartel.

At the meetings with Blumenthal, the Senators suggested that the foreign tax credit be redesigned to disallow company income tax payments made to the OPEC states to offset corporate income tax liability in the United States. They reasoned that since OPEC was a combination of countries whose purpose was to fix oil prices, such payments were, by definition, royalties and not income taxes, and therefore should not be credited against U.S. income taxes. The practical effect of such a policy would have been to make exploration and production in non-OPEC states more attractive because any payments to their governments could be legitimately credited against U.S. income tax liability as foreign income tax payments. But there was little interest in pursuing these or other suggestions. Only after front-page articles in *The Washington Post*, criticizing the lack of an international dimension to the energy policy President Carter announced in April 1977, did the Internal Revenue Service begin to seriously address the foreign tax credit issue.

Finally, in a series of rulings published on June 15, 1979, the I.R.S. adopted the basic concept that had been urged upon Blumenthal two years earlier. Led by the Mobil Oil Corporation, one of the Aramco partners, the companies have been lobbying furiously in the House Ways and Means Committee to reverse these rulings by legislation, an effort that has drawn little attention in the national media. Whatever the fate of these particular rulings, the episode is symptomatic of the relative disinterest of high Administration officials since 1973 in coming to grips with the need for devising a strategy specifically designed to reduce the power of the OPEC cartel to fix the price of international crude oil.

Arnold Safer's book, *International Oil Policy*, and the book's foreword by Senator Edward Kennedy are significant in this regard, not only because they specifically address the cartel question but because they openly challenge the assumptions that have governed American policy. Thus, Senator Kennedy states—in what may be a preview of his own Presidential energy policy—that "the most serious flaw, both politically and economically, in the President's energy package is its virtual silence about OPEC." If, said the Senator, "the President is asking the American people for sacrifices, then he should be prepared to tell them what plans he might have for attempting to dilute the price-setting powers of the cartel," and he challenged the thesis propounded by then Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, among others, that the world is running out of oil: The Admin-

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istration is telling us that the world as a whole faces a physical shortage of oil by 1985 or 1990. That proposition is open to question. Oil may be scarce in the United States, at least temporarily, but it is questionable that the world as a whole is facing the prospect of a long-term shortage."

It is that proposition of no physical shortage of oil over the long haul that lies at the heart of Safer's book and his specific proposals. Safer, until recently a vice president of Irving Trust Company, holds to the view that the increased prices imposed by OPEC will lead to more supply: "The very rise in world oil prices begun in 1975 is likely to lead to major oil surpluses around the world in the years ahead." He notes that "the world's proven reserves of crude oil were some 50 billion [barrels] higher in January 1979 than they were in January 1974. In other words, over the past five years, new discoveries outpaced consumption by an average of 10 billion barrels per year."

Hence, in Safer's view the problem is less the physical scarcity of petroleum than the fact that the great majority of proven reserves are located in areas where political considerations limit the ability to exploit them. The proposed strategy, then, is not only to increase supply but to maximize the diversity of sources of supply. What he proposes is a "deal" in which the Government takes over setting the volume and price at which oil is imported into the United States in exchange for decontrolling the price of domestic oil. Rising prices in the domestic market, Safer argues, will elicit additional supply, but in international oil there is no "market" price; rather, there is a cartel price set by oil-producing governments, and therefore U.S. Government intervention is justified at the international level. Safer thus places great stress on the mechanics of operating in the international petroleum markets through Government intervention. He approves of the scheme proposed by Prof. Morris Adelman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a system of sealed bid auctioning of import tickets for access to the U.S. market, the object of which is to create competition among potential suppliers. Safer would have the U.S. Government aggressively promote the exploitation and production of petroleum in non-OPEC developing countries. He draws heavily on the work of Bernardo Grossling of the U.S. Geological Service in his expectations that such an effort would pay off. Grossling was among the first to foresee the major dimensions of Mexico's petroleum resources when this potential was being minimized by the Exxon Corporation, among others.

Since in Safer's view there is no real shortage of crude oil, and there is not likely to be one in the foreseeable future, the producing countries cannot be sure that the "market" will always be in their favor. Hence, their uncertainty as to the availability of alternate oil supplies to the United States will enable the U.S. Government to negotiate directly more favorable contract terms. Such a scheme would probably meet objections because of its direct burden upon the Treasury and the unforeseeable nature of the subsidy that would be required over time. But Safer has advanced a coherent argument for Government intervention in the international market and challenged the orthodox hypothesis of inevitable crude oil shortages.

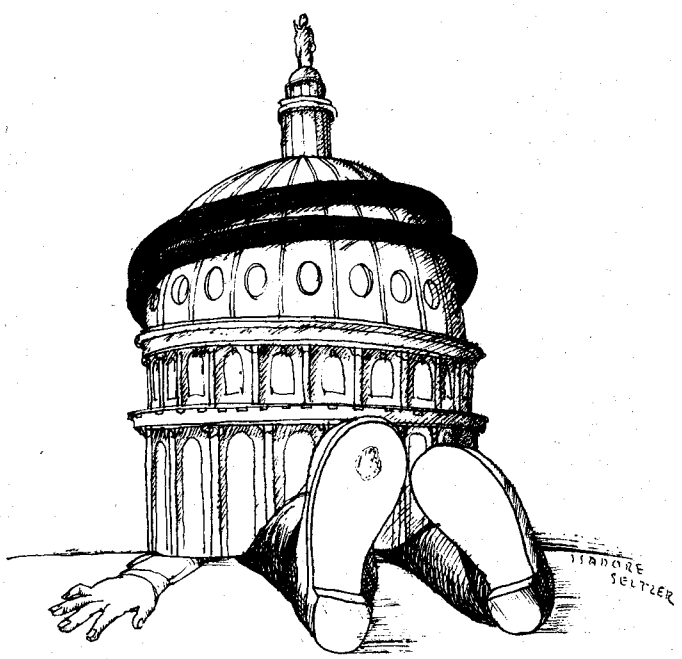
The credibility of this challenge may seem dubious in the aftermath of the great gasoline crunch of 1979 with its accompanying gas lines. However, a closer examination of the origin of that crunch shows that Safer could be right. The place to start is with the 1974 testimony of George Piercy before the Multinational Corporations Subcommittee. Piercy was then senior executive vice president of the Exxon Corporation. In his testimony he said that the OPEC price increases were made possible by the absence of spare capacity outside the cartel countries. Piercy defined spare capacity as "capacity that is idle, available to be used to produce more oil." Senators Edmund Muskie and Church pressed Piercy on the question of who was responsible for decisions as to how much spare capacity was needed and where it was to be located. According to Piercy, the companies were responsible for those decisions. If the companies were responsible for decisions as to investment in spare capacity, asked the Senators, have the companies deliberately underestimated demand, holding back installing such capacity outside of the Persian Gulf states because of their major holdings in the latter? Senator Muskie said:

> It seems to me that this line with respect to spare capacity has persisted for so long that it suggests a deliberate policy of underestimating demand . . . the picture I get is a deliberate policy of underestimating demand, failure to take advantage of full opportunity to enlarge capacity, and the result of that has been this enormous disparity between demand and capacity that confronts us with our problem today.

Church hammered the political point:

> You look at the profit picture of the consolidated net income of the five major U.S.-based oil companies as reported in their annual reports, 1946 through 1973, the demand goes up, the spare capacity goes down, and profits go up and up and up and up.

Despite the experience of 1973 and Piercy's testimony before the subcommittee, 1979 appeared to be a repeat of 1973. According to an article of July 8 in *The New York Times*, the shortages in 1979 were caused by a 2 percent



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shortfall in U.S. crude oil imports, or 400,000 barrels per day (b.p.d.). The Trans-Alaska Pipeline, in Alaska, which has a capacity to carry 2 million b.p.d., has been pumping oil at 1.2 million b.p.d. Recent studies apparently indicate that without further exploration, the reservoirs in the 10-billion-barrel Prudhoe Bay Reserve, from which the oil for the T.A.P. is derived, can sustain a maximum of only 1.6 million b.p.d. without endangering the fields. But the companies that own the pipeline did not make the necessary investments to install the two additional pumping stations along the line that would have enabled the additional 400,000 b.p.d. to be pumped out of the reserve. They were forecasting a crude oil surplus on the West Coast and were unwilling or unable to complete the pipeline from California to the Middle West, where the additional oil would have been absorbed. Moreover, there is at least some evidence that they preferred to build up pressure on the Congress to permit them to ship the oil to Japan, where it would have been more profitable for them, rather than transporting the additional 400,000 b.p.d. through the Panama Canal.

The Department of Energy did not intervene before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission when it held hearings on the rate to be charged for transporting the oil through the T.A.P. Before it set the rate, the F.E.R.C. should have required the companies to install the two additional pumping stations that would have achieved the maximum level of 1.6 million b.p.d. But the D.O.E. failed to advocate this course because its dominant thinking has been all along that the companies' interests are identical with the national interest of the United States and therefore we can safely leave critical decisions with respect to spare capacity to the companies. When the Iranian upheaval took place and Iranian exports of crude oil dropped, there was no spare capacity in place in Alaska to take up the slack. As Muskie and Church pointed out in the 1974 hearings, the companies had a vested interest in not making the necessary investments in spare capacity. The result was the great gas crunch of 1979.

But just as a marginal shortfall in U.S. imports can have major price repercussions in the international oil market, a marginal surplus can create a disproportionate downward pressure on the price. Saudi Arabian authorities understand this very well. When they were negotiating the purchase of the four U.S. partner companies' equity interest in Aramco, the Saudis insisted upon a minimum "lifting" agreement. This is an agreement to "take" or "pay" the equivalent of an agreed-upon volume of oil, in this case a minimum of up to 7 million to 7.5 million b.p.d. Why did the Saudis insist upon a minimum lifting agreement? Because they could not be certain that there would not be a surplus of crude in the world market, and they wanted to be assured that a minimum volume of their oil would be placed in the market through the four American companies. Actually, the buy-out agreement has never been consummated. Aramco is a Delaware corporation, and no stock has ever been transferred to Saudi ownership by any one of the four American partner companies.

The companies have also been careful not to accord the same privilege to other producers. In August 1978, the Shah of Iran broke off negotiations with the Iranian consortium of private oil companies because the Aramco partners in the Iranian consortium were not prepared to agree to giving the Shah the same minimum lifting agreement as they had given the Saudis.

Is it in the national interest of the United States for the four American shareholder companies in Aramco to give the Saudi Arabians a minimum lifting agreement but not, for example, for such an offer to be made to the Mexican Government? When six American gas companies tried to make a deal with Mexico to purchase natural gas on a take-or-pay basis, the Department of Energy intervened to veto the agreement on the ground that the price was too high. But there was no intervention with respect to the Saudi agreement, where the price was set at the level established by an international cartel of which Saudi Arabia was the key member. The substantial preference in U.S. Government circles for the Saudi Arabian connection was thus apparent.

It is interesting to explore still further some aspects of the Saudi Arabian connection. Saudi Arabia has announced that it has been selling its crude oil at a price less than that of the OPEC cartel. The Saudis also announced that they would increase production by some amount above the 8.5 million b.p.d. at which they had been producing in the first six months of 1979. Ninety percent of the Saudi oil is sold through the four American partner companies, and Saudi Arabian oil has accounted for approximately 16 percent of U.S. oil imports, or approximately 1.1 million b.p.d. Where, then, is the $5-per-barrel saving on Saudi Arabian oil (the difference between $18, the price at which Saudi Arabia is selling its oil, and the $23 price of the other cartel member countries) being reflected in the price to the American consumer? Unclassified Central Intelligence Agency figures on U.S. imports for April 1979 seem to indicate that Saudi imports fell disproportionately to the fall in total U.S. imports. This could indicate that the Aramco partners are shifting the lower-cost Saudi oil into the German and Japanese markets, where product prices are uncontrolled and the profit margins higher. Why, then, should the Saudis take seriously Administration warnings about the adverse consequences of the oil price increase?

The expectation that Saudi Arabia will provide ever increasing increments of crude oil is likely to turn out to be a desert mirage. Each time that Aramco has tried to increase production rapidly it has run into technical constraints. In 1973, when demand for oil was booming in the industrial world, Aramco attempted such an increase. Pressures dropped precipitately in several key reservoirs and there was salt-water seepage and corrosion in the wells, which endangered production. Testifying before the Multinational Corporations Subcommittee in June 1974, the chief engineer of Socal stated that if there had never been an Arab oil embargo, Aramco would have had to cut back nearly 40 percent of then Saudi Arabian oil production in order to avert permanent damage to the reservoirs.

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In early 1977, when Aramco was ordered by the Saudi authorities to increase production rapidly to hold down the price increase mandated by other OPEC states, the problems recurred, defeating the Saudi objective. Again in 1979, water encroachment in a part of a main Saudi oilfield led to a cutback of 500,000 b.p.d. in production. In June, the C.I.A. reduced its estimate of Saudi Arabia's maximum sustainable producing capacity (the rate at which a given amount of oil can be produced for more than six months) from approximately 10.2 million to 9.5 million b.p.d. And an April 1979 report issued by the Senate International Economic Policy Subcommittee noted that Saudi Arabia was unlikely to significantly add to its production capacity because to do so would lead to an unacceptably rapid depletion of major reservoirs. The report, based upon nearly 60,000 documents subpoenaed from two of the Aramco partner companies, Exxon and Socal, also concluded that the prospects for finding major additional reserves in Saudi Arabia were dim.

At the height of the gas lines, as a personal favor to President Carter and to show the other OPEC members that it still had some muscle, Saudi Arabia's King Khalid agreed to "substantially" increase oil production above the 8.5-million b.p.d. level the Saudis had previously established. But if the past is any guide, we are likely to see an eventual cutback to previous levels. This cutback would be blamed on Saudi dissatisfaction with the progress of the West Bank negotiations, but it is much more likely to be actually related to the recurrent technical problems that Aramco has encountered when it has attempted to rapidly increase crude oil production in Saudi Arabia. Whether the public, however, will ever know the truth is another matter. The companies and the State Department have consistently sought to suppress the facts with respect to Saudi Arabian oil production. Only Congressional committees armed with and willing to use the subpoena power of the Senate have been able to penetrate the veil of secrecy and misinformation which has consistently surrounded the realities of the Saudi Arabian oil production picture. □

WEEKEND UPDATE

A Visit From the Gulf Truth Squad

JAMES GANNON

An unusual feature of the NBC-TV news magazine *Weekend* was the producer's footnote. Reuven Frank, *Weekend*'s creator and executive producer until it was canceled last April, believed that incidents occurring in production which did not fit into the final report were sometimes sufficiently interesting for broadcast. This would be done in the form of a brief on-camera postscript by the producer.

Consider this article the producer's footnote to a report broadcast December 2, 1978, on how the Gulf Oil Corporation liquidated its franchise dealer system in Southern California (see Gannon, "How Gulf Dealt Its Dealers Out," *The Nation*, February 24). There was no footnote on that program. The events I am about to describe happened later —as a result of the film. These are events that, in any case, you would never see filmed for television.

Gulf is the thirteenth largest corporation in the world, with total revenues last year of $18 billion. Like other major oil companies, it is vertically integrated: it produces, transports and refines crude oil, and markets oil products—giving it control that extends "from well head to pump nozzle," as the phrase is nicely turned among people in the industry. Horizontally, Gulf has entered into cartel agreements with other multinational oil companies, through which they have jointly decided how much of the world's oil was to be produced where and sent to which markets. Gulf is also diversified—with interests in chemicals, coal, uranium and other energy-related ventures.

In addition to manipulating successfully the world oil economy, from 1961 to 1973 Gulf paid out about $12 million for political bribes in the United States and abroad. These were "off-the-books" corporate funds laundered through a subsidiary in the Bahamas. Gulf was caught in the Watergate investigation on a $100,000 contribution to the Committee to Re-Elect the President. The Gulf board of directors, most of whom were unaware of what was going on, commissioned a full investigation by John J. McCloy, Big Oil's *éminence grise*. McCloy did a thorough job of it, too, and in his report, published as a book called *The Great Oil Spill*, he said the episode was "shot through with illegality." Four corporate officials resigned, including the chairman, Bob R. Dorsey, and Gulf tightened up its auditing.

Gulf entered the West Coast market in the mid-1960s, but in 1972 announced its intention to close out its holdings from Northern California to Canada. It began to cut back in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada, where it had more than 1,000 independent franchise-dealer stations, ostensibly by eliminating retail stations as dealers left them voluntarily.

Actually, the *Weekend* report showed, the dealers were being squeezed out. The methods included overloading them with T.B.A. (tires, batteries and accessories), changing the gasoline delivery policy from billing based on pump meter readings to cash up front, squeezing the dealers' profit margins, creating unfair competition for the dealers with cut-rate company-operated stations and demanding sharply increased rents. A former Gulf sales representative, Charles Kendall, produced a coded list of stations (labeled "Targets for Mutual") that Gulf wanted closed by the end of 1975. Kendall said that dealers were pressured to sign "mutual" cancellation agreements to leave their stations so Gulf would be legally clean.

James Gannon was a producer of NBC's Weekend *and is now a producer of the network's* Prime Time Sunday *program.*

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The story was told through the testimony of Kendall and several victimized dealers. Gulf refused to be interviewed on film, but said in writing that it never pressured a dealer out of a station so that it could take over and operate the station. It called Kendall's statements "either untrue or completely misleading," regretted the term "Targets for Mutual" but called it merely an informal list of low-profit stations—not a hit list—and said that cutting out marginal stations benefited the consumer.

End of story, I thought. The immediate reaction was virtually nil. Weeks later, I read that Virginia had passed legislation to prohibit major companies from operating new retail outlets. The *Weekend* film was credited with persuading key legislators. I learned later that the Virginia dealers' association had bought a video cassette from NBC. Soon afterward, a source in California told me that Gulf was making a film to "answer *Weekend*." I knew nothing of its contents, but it developed that in at least two states where both the *Weekend* and Gulf films were shown, legislation similar to Virginia's had failed. I was no more than a distant spectator to these events with only a passing interest—until Gulf brought me into the arena.

It began with a corporate letter signed by Jerry McAfee, the chief executive officer of Gulf, addressed to Fred Silverman, the chief executive of NBC. The letter referred to the company's "distress" at the "irreparable damage done to Gulf," calling the *Weekend* film "irresponsible and inaccurate" and asking for a meeting with NBC News officials and the *Weekend* staff to show the Gulf rebuttal film, suggesting it would be "instructive in correcting journalistic abuses in the future." Reuven Frank said it was "a remarkably feeble letter." I saw it as the opening move of a crude power play by one of television's major advertisers to squelch investigative journalism.

A meeting was arranged, but by this time *Weekend* had been canceled by NBC News. The meeting took place in the office of Richard Fischer, executive vice president of NBC News. When I arrived I found Fischer with Robert Goralski, a former NBC News correspondent. "Meet Bob Goralski," said Fischer. "He used to be with us, then he went to work for Gulf." As Bob and Dick chatted amiably about old times, I considered the marvelous subtleties. Goralski had been with NBC for perhaps fifteen years, and I assume he parted on good terms for a better-paying job. Whatever his affiliation at this moment, he could have walked in off the street and been treated like an old comrade. As it happened, he was there on behalf of one of the world's largest private powers to challenge the credibility of an NBC report on how Gulf used its power against its own dealers. I could not help but admire Gulf's obvious ploy of having Goralski as the advance man.

Soon we were joined by Nigel Ryan, NBC News vice president for documentaries, and William E. Moffett, Gulf's vice president for public affairs. Moffett is one of twelve principal officers of the parent corporation—actually number twelve in the pecking order. That in itself is a step up for him; the 1976 annual report listed him merely among "other corporate officers."

Moffett showed himself to be a purposeful man with a knack for making a point by implication. He stressed to the news executives that he had no quarrel with NBC—only with the *Weekend* film (meaning: isolate *Weekend* from the rest of news, an appeal that Fischer could appreciate as part of the management team that ran the news department and had just canceled *Weekend*). Moffett said he had battled the Gulf legal department on this one (meaning: I'm really a friend; I saved NBC from a lawsuit). After Moffett showed the Gulf rebuttal, which was remarkable for the ferocity of its attack, Fischer asked if it or any part of it would be available for broadcast. Moffett said he did not want to carry the issue any further (meaning: let's keep it quiet).

And no wonder he wanted to keep it quiet when you consider the contents of the Gulf rebuttal. I hesitate to use terms like "distortion," "half-truth" and "out of context" because they are so overworked. But the terms here are appropriate. Perhaps they are understatements.

Gulf's favorite technique in the film was to attribute to the *Weekend* film "allegations" that *Weekend* simply did not make, then to defend against charges that Gulf itself had concocted. The Gulf announcer spoke of "eight specific allegations" by *Weekend*. "The allegations," he said, "are false. The purpose of this . . . program is to answer the allegations with the true facts." A "true fact" is that the *Weekend* program was not constructed around eight specific allegations. There was one basic allegation—that Gulf squeezed its dealers. The rest of the film was devoted to supporting testimony and documentation.

Take as just one example, Gulf's first alleged "allegation" attributed to *Weekend*:

> Allegation number one: Gulf required a dealer, Mr. Red Fair, to buy a certain number of tires in order to maintain his gasoline allocation. He did not buy the tires and was not delivered his allocation of gas. During one month he was out of gas for seventeen days.

In response, Gulf said Red Fair received his entire allocation of gas each month; he sold gas to the state patrol and that's why he ran out; Gulf never tried to tie gasoline sales to the purchase of tires, and any dealer who ran out of gas did so because he used up his allocation.

There was no such "allegation" in the *Weekend* film. Red Fair was quoted in relation to a statement by Kendall, who recalled a meeting in 1974 at which, he said, a Gulf executive told sales representatives to push hard on a Gulf tire program, and if the dealers don't buy tires "you tell them they don't get gasoline." Kendall said that about twenty-five dealers were subsequently threatened with a gasoline cutoff in his presence. He referred us to two of them, Art Wallbaum and Red Fair. Wallbaum said: "Yes, during the so-called crunch I was told that if I didn't buy tires, no gas. And I did buy tires. I carried lots of tires, and I never did run out of gas." Fair said: "I didn't see fit to buy [tires] at that time. I was stocking over 200 . . . and consequently I ran out of gas several times, once for seventeen days out of

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the month. They just cut me off, wouldn't deliver any to me at all."

Weekend made no mention of the Federal allocations then in effect, but that's an interesting story since Gulf brings it up. Demand at the time was very high, and dealers could usually sell more gas than allocated. The Gulf cutoff threat was aimed at gas above allocation. Cooperative dealers like Wallbaum were supplied, while the stubborn ones like Red Fair were not. *Weekend*'s point was that Gulf tied gasoline sales to tire purchases—only that. The business about allocations was judged to be a less important, time-consuming distraction. Gulf did deny the tie-in, and that, at least, is responsive. But Kendall has a lot of corroboration—more than *Weekend* aired, plus a memorandum dated December 17, 1973, from a Gulf executive with the notation: "T.B.A. District Goal for 1974 will be $25 per thousand gallons ratio (dealer purchase)—NO EXCEPTIONS."

Space does not permit more detailed analysis. But it is accurate to say that distortions abound in the Gulf rebuttal. In one instance Gulf admitted that it had changed its gasoline remittal system from billing to a cash basis. In justifying the change, Gulf said many dealers remained on the new system when given the option of going back to the old. But it left out an important point—that the option was given as a condition of a consent decree after the Department of Energy found the change to be illegal.

At times, an issue boils down to Gulf's word against a dealer's. For example, in denying one of its fabricated "allegations," Gulf referred to the case of Danny Davis, who told *Weekend* that Gulf refused to buy back his T.B.A. when he moved over to Mobil, so he took the merchandise with him and was trying to sell it out of his Mobil station at half price. I quote from the Gulf film and the response by Danny Davis when the quotes were read to him over the phone:

> Gulf: The dealer in the [*Weekend*] film who complained so about our alleged refusal to take back his tires, batteries and accessories never asked to return them and declined Gulf's specific offer to buy the merchandise back.
> Davis: That's a lie.
> Gulf: In fact he continued to buy the merchandise from us after he left his Gulf station.
> Davis: That's a lie.

Davis said his sales representative told him Gulf was no longer in the T.B.A. business and had no interest in buying back his merchandise. But it's the company's word against his. According to another retired representative, Gordon Curtiss, that's the way Gulf likes it—where there is no solid proof or corroborating witness. Davis and Gulf are locked in a court battle.

Gulf said at one point that it never "terminated a dealer's lease or pressured a dealer to leave a station so it might take over and operate the station itself." But Gulf was convicted of doing just that. The court awarded the dealer, Rex Kerr, $78,000. *Weekend* filmed his former station being operated by Gulf.

Most surprising about the Gulf rebuttal is something it did not say. It did not attack *Weekend*'s key witness, Charles Kendall, whose testimony is most damaging. Kendall had helped Kerr's case with a sworn deposition upon which *Weekend* based much of its report. Kendall testified about "Targets for Mutual" and quoted a Gulf executive as referring to a master list of stations Gulf wanted terminated as the "enemies list." Kendall cited another Gulf executive on loading down the dealers with T.B.A., and told of still another executive's remark that if dealers did not go along with the 1974 tire program they should be threatened with a gas cutoff. Gulf lashes out around Kendall, but not at him. It attacks individual dealers and the "militant" dealers' associations, but Kendall is never mentioned.

Gulf did find an inaccuracy in the *Weekend* script. In response to *Weekend* inquiries before broadcast, Gulf said, "In 1972 there were more than 1,000 stations in the . . . Los Angeles Division, which includes Southern California, southern Nevada and Arizona." We used that figure, but at another point the *Weekend* script said Gulf wiped out "more than a thousand dealers in Southern California in just five years." That was excessive. I regret the error.

But Gulf did not go to all this trouble to correct one small error. It made a political document to head off an onslaught of state legislation that the oil companies didn't like. Then it tried intimidation at NBC—behind closed doors, cut off from the light of public scrutiny. More fundamentally, Gulf has gone beyond influence to revisionism, trying by the sheer force of its propaganda apparatus to alter events after the fact—and thus far, getting away with it. □

HOW TO CARRY A NATION

Zaire's Primrose Path to the Poorhouse

WENDY COOPER

A couple of years ago, according to a story current on the expatriate cocktail circuit in central Africa, a prominent Third World journalist was interviewing Zaire's head of state, Mobutu Sese Seko. "Mr. President," the reporter inquired, "it's said that you are the fourth richest man in the world. Is this true?" Mobutu's response was indignant. "The fourth?" he repeated. "No, no, no. I am the *third* richest man in the world."

Mobutu's sensitivity about his ranking in the global plutocracy may be dismissed as asinine or worse but more is involved than mere bombast. As is the case with most statistics about Zaire, there are no accurate figures on Mobutu's

Wendy Cooper is a staff reporter for The Journal of Commerce *who has covered Zaire's economy extensively.*

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personal worth. But in any event, as dictatorial ruler for the past fifteen years of a nation three and a half times the size of Texas, whose natural resources make it one of the richest in Africa, Mobutu's potential wealth is virtually fathomless. In addition to its vast reserves of copper and cobalt, and its lesser-known deposits of zinc, tin, gold and uranium, Zaire is the world's principal exporter of industrial diamonds and these, reputedly, are Mobutu's personal concession. He has also surrounded himself with a clique, known as the "Presidential family," whose personal loyalty is secured by their license to amass enormous fortunes. "Uncle Lito," for example, reportedly runs the highly lucrative trade with South Africa whereby luxury food imports line the stomachs of the President's privileged inner circle.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of Zaire's twenty-six million people languish in abject poverty. Even *The Economist*, which is usually understated, reported last March that "while people were dying of starvation in Kinshasa [the capital], [Mobutu] was cruising on Zaire River, accompanied by four of France's master chefs." And, if Mobutu's personal finances permit such excesses, the nation itself is effectively bankrupt.

Nevertheless, while Mobutu may be among the most offensive of his country's problems, he may also be one of the least intractable. Revolt has ripped through Zaire with increasing frequency in the past months. Violent student demonstrations were reportedly followed by a strike wave in June that hit banks, breweries, hospitals, national mines, transport and water companies. Zaire's army—about 60,000 strong if the gendarmerie is included—is said to be paid and fed irregularly, if at all. It has been frequently charged with being more effective in terrorizing unarmed civilians than in defending the country. Add to this reports that inflation is running at a rate of 100 percent plus and that the man-on-the-Kinshasa-street has to pay more than the average monthly wage for a bag of manioc, his staple food, and chances of mutiny multiply.

There is growing agreement among Africa watchers that Mobutu is incapable of reform, that his overthrow is virtually inevitable and that the United States should dissociate itself from his regime before it totally alienates another group of black Africans desperate for a better deal. Scholars such as David Gould of the University of Pittsburgh and Guy Gran, international economic consultant and editor of a forthcoming book on Zaire's development crisis, have been predicting disaster for years; now Congressional criticism has intensified, and within the State Department there are those who are having second thoughts. Just before Congress's summer recess, House and Senate conferees responded to Representative Stephen Solarz's assertion that "trying to reform Zaire's army is like trying to sell chastity belts to a whorehouse" by voting to cut Zaire's foreign military sales credits from $10.5 million to $8 million. They also insisted on the inclusion of language requiring the Administration to provide Congress with assurances of substantial progress on the elimination of corruption and human rights violations in Zaire's army. Earlier, at hearings in May before the Subcommittee on International Finance of the Senate Banking Committee, Chairman Paul Tsongas made clear his intention to monitor further injections of U.S. credit into the massive Inga-Shaba power transmission line project, which was designed to serve the copper mines in Shaba Province; its necessity has been vigorously debated. Congress is also investigating the alleged involvement of Zairian troops in the suppression of riots in the Central African Empire last January. Two General Accounting Office investigations are being conducted into the misappropriations of U.S. military credits and food sent to Zaire. The Agency for International Development is re-evaluating at least one of its projects there. And the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the State Department recently dispatched a deputy assistant secretary to Kinshasa on a fact-finding mission.

Nevertheless, the official line in the State Department—supported by a number of Congressmen—continues to be faith in the chances of reform. Mobutu, no matter how unsavory, remains an essential in the West's armor, the argument goes, if for no other reason than that no alternative to him exists. Dissent from this line within the Government is apparently not admissible. Robert Remole, political counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, was recently forced into what he sardonically describes as "early retirement" for questioning the official wisdom.

The ranks of those with a stake in Mobutu include half a dozen Western nations, approximately 100 private creditors, including thirteen major commercial banks and a handful of international agencies, of which the International Monetary Fund is the most important. In every case, the underlying attraction is Zaire's vast resources. Some of the nations regard Zairian mineral output as a vital strategic supply. It is the world's sixth-ranking copper producer and its leading source of cobalt. The United States, for example, imports about 95 percent of the cobalt it uses; at least 50 percent of this comes from Zaire. The silvery metal, which can withstand incredibly intense heat, is a vital component in the aerospace industry. And the threat to its supply posed by the Shaba invasions of March 1977 and May 1978 was enough to provoke near hysteria in some circles.

Zaire has loomed large in several geopolitical game plans. The "Shaba II" invasion of last year pitted Americans, French, Belgians, Saudis, Egyptians, Senegalese, Moroccans and Togolese against Angolans, Cubans, East Germans and Russians—not to mention South Africa and a West German rocket company (which was accused of conducting tests of the cruise missile for the Central Intelligence Agency on a 39,000-mile-square patch of Zairian territory). For a few weeks in May and June 1978 the alarm over the Soviet-Cuban presence in the Horn of Africa (alarm shared by conservative Middle Eastern oil producers), along with fears about the consequences of failure of the "Anglo-American Plan" in Rhodesia and the fall of Angola to Marxism, made Mobutu seem the West's last African bas-

PRESS & BENCH. Conflicts between the media and the judiciary will be discussed at a conference in New York City, October 13. See Letters page for details.

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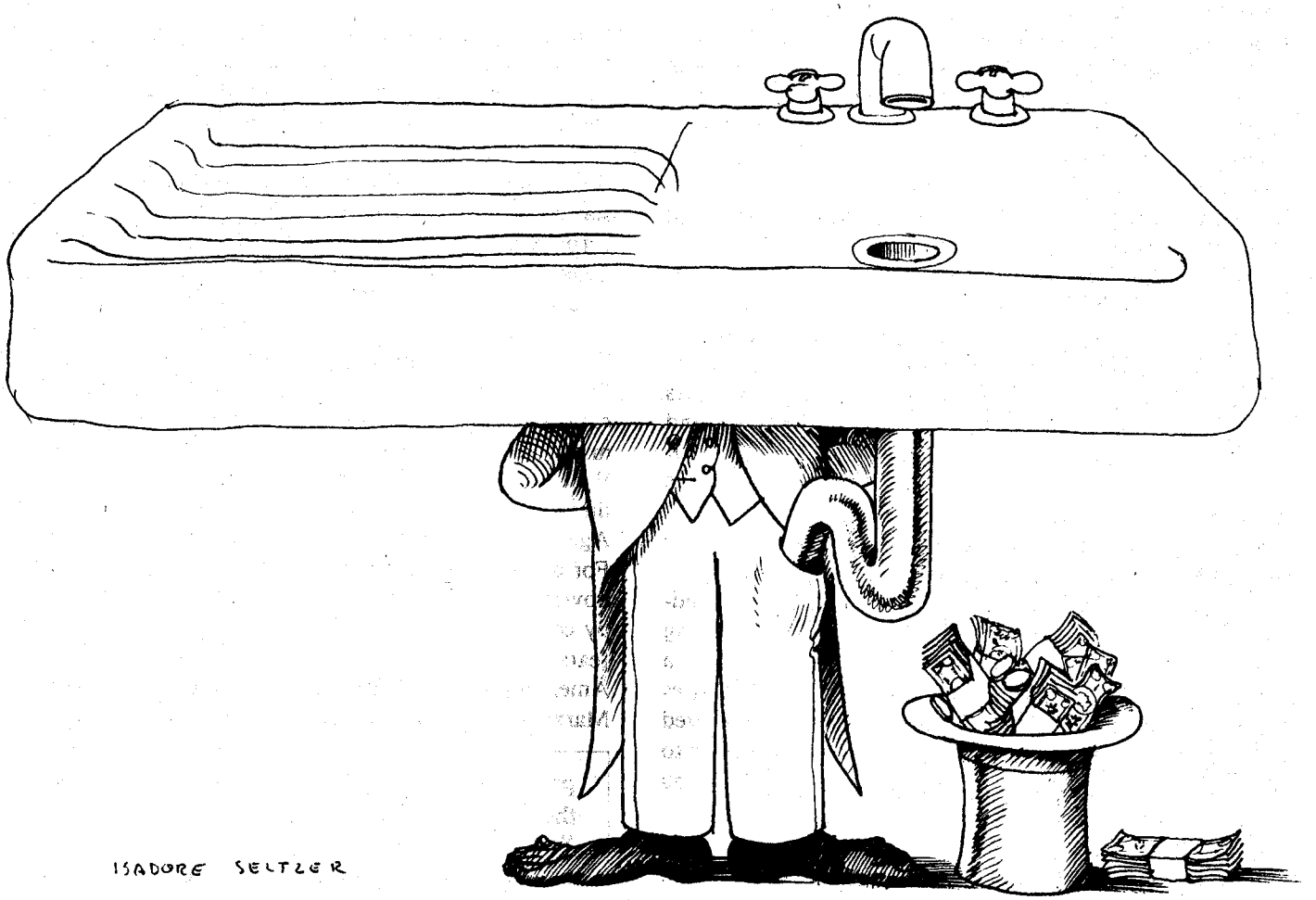
tion. As Zaire scholar Crawford Young and others have since pointed out, the initiative for the Shaba II invasion lay primarily with Shaban rebels who had fled to exile in Angola ten years previously rather than with the Angolan Government and its Cuban, Soviet and East German backers. At the time, however, the accusations flew thick and fast between Washington and Havana.

Meanwhile, 1,500 Moroccans (motivated partly by a desire for greater Western backing of Morocco's annexation of the Western Sahara), 600 Senegalese and token units from Gabon, Togo and the Ivory Coast were drawn in as members of an "Inter-African Force" to guard the Shaba mines. The situation was further complicated by Franco-Belgian economic rivalry. With American logistical support, France rushed 600 Foreign Legionnaires to Shaba, and Belgium dispatched 1,850 paratroopers in a combined effort to halt the insurgents' offensive. Both France and Belgium are far more dependent than the United States on Zairian copper, and they share concern about cobalt. It wasn't long, however, before Belgium started accusing France of using military intervention as a pretext for expanding its economic influence in Zaire.

Belgium's estimated $700 million in direct investments make it the principal Western investor in Zaire. French direct investment has been about $20 million, but France has been trying to enlarge its stake. The Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minieres, for example, recently purchased the 28-percent share held by a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, an international consortium working on the huge Tenke-Fungarume copper venture in southern Shaba, a project effectively mothballed since 1976.

South Africa's offer of aid to Mobutu—primarily fuel and support funds—reflected a mutuality of interests. Zaire has bought food, medicine and, according to some reports, most of its mining equipment from South Africa. Since the closure of the Benguela Railway during the 1975 Angolan civil war, much of Shaba's copper had been rerouted, via Zambia and Rhodesia, to South Africa's port of East London. And politically, the two countries have shared an antipathy toward the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola regime in Luanda—although after Shaba II there was some diplomatic reconciliation between Mobutu and the late Agostinho Neto, Angola's President.

The problem of Zaire's huge debt remains, however. The estimates vary, depending on who is computing them. But the total long-term foreign debt is approximately $3.5 billion. According to recent I.M.F. estimates, $1.334 billion of that total was in arrears or overdue as of last December; by their own reckoning, $250 million is in arrears to private commercial banks. The story of Zaire's economic crisis, of which its notorious debt is only the most obvious symptom, goes back at least to 1974, and quite possibly to ten years before that in 1965, when Gen. Joseph D. Mobutu wrested power from Moise Tshombe, leader of Katanga Province (now called Shaba). Mobutu, as leader of a single national political party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution,



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is the unquestioned powerbroker in what Crawford Young has described as "a leviathan state." With a few insignificant exceptions, no political opposition parties have been allowed to operate in Zaire.

Mobutu continued the colonial economic system of commodity dependence. Booming copper prices between 1972 and 1974 kept Zaire's foreign exchanges particularly buoyant (the red metal accounts for about 75 percent of the country's export earnings) and lured Western capital: significantly, the bulk of this capital influx was geared to expand mineral exports on the assumption that prices would stay high. Meanwhile, the copper boom also encouraged a rapid expansion of the Government's budget, and in 1973 Mobutu embarked on a program of "Zairianization," which, as World Bank observers noted at the time, caused considerable production dislocations, particularly in agriculture. It also created a political patronage structure with a vested interest in continued inefficiency. To finance its ballooning deficit (from about $150 million in 1971 to about $400 million in 1974), the Government borrowed. In 1974, when copper prices were at their peak, the country also recorded its highest level of foreign borrowing to date. Then, right at the end of 1974, the bottom suddenly dropped out of the world copper market. When the crunch came, the Government could not renege on investment commitments or overcome bureaucratic opposition to make cuts in line with declining revenues. The final blow came in 1975 when the civil war in Angola caused the closing of the Benguela Railway, Zaire's cheapest export route. In 1975, a $500 million trade deficit delivered a crushing blow to a country with an annual G.N.P. of only $3 billion. Nevertheless, the World Bank itself concluded in an internal report dated April 1977 that the reversal in the terms of trade coupled with events in Angola were not the root causes; rather, they had "triggered off a mechanism that was wound up to breaking point by the policies pursued since 1971-72, culminating in 1974."

In the summer of 1975, Zaire stopped servicing its commercial debt, and Western commercial banks were threatened with default by a sovereign borrower. Technically, a country is "in default" as soon as it falls behind on payments. But, as the next few years were to demonstrate, it is up to the creditors to actually *declare* default—and the banks did their damnedest to avoid this. A vital principle was at stake for them in the case of Zaire: the prevention of a rush to moratoriums by Third World debtors. For Irving Friedman, senior adviser for international operations at Citibank, the bank with the single largest commitment in Zaire, there was an additional principle to be upheld: no "rescheduling" or stretching out of maturities on Zaire's existing debt. The global scurryings of the 64-year-old former World Bank and I.M.F. bureaucrat in this period earned him the title of the "Henry Kissinger of the monetary world"; but the semantic contortions through which he passed in order to avoid the admission of failure inherent in a rescheduling tried the patience of even his fellow bankers.

What essentially happened in the aftermath of Zaire's financial crunch was this: Early in 1976, Zaire and the I.M.F. agreed on a "stabilization" program by which the former was to take a number of draconian measures to set its financial house in order. At midyear, the so-called Paris Club (Zaire's governmental creditors) met in that city and agreed to reschedule about $1.5 billion in official or officially guaranteed debt. (It's worth noting that Zaire failed to meet the first repayment date.) Friedman, however, announced at the end of the year that instead of a rescheduling, Citibank would undertake to raise a new $250 million loan. But the new money was contingent on Zaire reaching an agreement with the I.M.F. whereby even more severe performance criteria would be adhered to. Zaire was also to pay its overdue interest payments into a special account. Essentially, the attractions of a new loan to a creditor are that, as long as some semblance of creditworthiness can be shown, confidence is maintained. But the difference between this and a rescheduling is almost metaphysical—in both cases money is repaid later rather than now. At the time, indeed, some of the other bank creditors called Friedman's scheme "cosmetic nonsense." After all, $250 million was roughly the amount that Zaire would owe the banks in 1978 and was, thus, said some, a "refinancing in disguise."

Friedman's methods raised some additional questions. According to a report prepared in 1977 for the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy, Citibank succeeded in convincing the other banks to go along with its scheme by arguing that the $250 million would be a short-term (six-month) loan used, not to repay old debts but for essential imports. But the Zaire Government had other ideas. It insisted that this type of "trade credit" was not good enough and that it wanted a medium-term (five-to-seven-year) loan instead. It agreed to pay up its overdue interest, but put the principal into a blocked account, not to be released until Citibank came up with a commitment for the $250 million. With some justification, the Senate report asked: "Just who has the greatest leverage at this stage of the debt buildup—the creditor banks or the debtor countries?"

Now, two years later, it looks as if the latter win. But it is a Pyrrhic victory. Reform remains a pipedream. In June 1978, with much fanfare, the Mobutu Plan was unveiled in an attempt to assuage creditor fears. But, although billed as a blueprint for the country's economic salvation, it is more accurately described as a list of problems. (The calls for economic and financial stabilization, including increases in production, are empty in view of the country's indebtedness, lack of technical personnel and effectively institutionalized corruption. The whole road system is said to have deteriorated to the point where it is almost impossible to travel, and millions of peasants reportedly have resorted to subsistence agriculture in a desperate attempt to feed themselves.) Even installation of the I.M.F.'s own personnel in key economic management positions hasn't helped much. For example, when Erwin Blumenthal, an official hired by the fund who was, until recently, overseeing operations at the Central Bank, denied export credits early this year to fifty companies owned by powerful Zairians until they had

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repaid debts and repatriated foreign exchange, Mobutu reportedly immediately "rehabilitated" twenty of them. Last March, profits from the mysterious sale of 200 tons of cobalt were not returned to the Central Bank, much to the I.M.F.'s consternation. In fact, only about one quarter of foreign exchange currently passes through the Central Bank at all, according to one source recently returned from Kinshasa.

Conditions like these have greatly delayed implementation of the I.M.F.'s long-awaited "stabilization" plan—a plan which, incidentally, has been redrawn twice since its inception in 1976. An I.M.F. suggestion that a 20 percent ceiling be imposed on wage increases was brushed aside by Mobutu, who jacked up civil servants' salaries by double that amount almost before the plane taking the I.M.F. team back to Washington had left the runway. This move, plus downward changes in projected copper and cobalt earnings (because of a sharp drop in production) and the release of what was considered a totally unrealistic 1979 budget, led the fund to insist on a renegotiation of the plan last summer. At that point, commercial bankers in New York were confessing privately that they were "tired" of the whole issue.

Then, in August, the I.M.F. approved a $150 million "standby" loan for Zaire "in support of the Government's economic stabilization program." Friedman called the credit "an encouraging step," but he must be far less encouraged by the results of his longer-term plans. The hoped-for cooperation with the I.M.F. has not gone at all smoothly. (It might be added that I.M.F.-instigated measures such as severe credit ceilings, devaluation and import restrictions have probably exacerbated the country's current miseries.) Moreover, a rescheduling of Zaire's commercial debt, Friedman now admits, "looks by far the most likely thing." The much-touted new loan—shrunken to $218 million when last heard of—apparently has faded from the picture. Moratorium, meanwhile, has been stayed. But the latest United Nations figures on Third World debt are not encouraging: private-bank lending has grown twice as fast as loans from governments and international bodies and, by the end of last year, borrowers were net debtors owing a total of $10 billion.

The future of Zaire's finances, say the banks, depends on Mobutu and the I.M.F. The Paris Club reportedly is waiting for the banks before it does another rescheduling—having learned enough in the past three years, apparently, not to want to be seen bailing out the banks. Meanwhile, a $1 billion investment program, to be submitted for approval to the World Bank (and half financed by Zaire itself in local currency) is still at the time of this writing expected from Mobutu. When asked recently if he remained optimistic about Zaire's chances of reform under Mobutu, André Ernemann, Belgian Ambassador to the United Nations and chairman of two meetings of the "Zaire Club" of concerned Western governments held in Europe last year, laughed wryly. "We have to be optimistic," he said, "there's no other way."

The base line of this position appears to be that "now that we've gone so far, we have to complete it." And the concrete results of such reasoning were succinctly demonstrated in the recent Congressional conferees' meeting on security assistance for Zaire. Morrison Knudsen Company, the Idaho construction company and prime contractor on the Inga-Shaba power transmission line, urged Idaho Senator Frank Church to retain military assistance in order to protect U.S. corporate personnel in Zaire. Compliance with this request, of course, implies acceptance of Inga-Shaba too—although its usefulness to Zaire has been seriously questioned in Congressional hearings. Meanwhile, expatriate technicians who are supposed to be operating the copper mines were reportedly wary of returning from summer vacations in Europe since the Inter-African Force, brought in during the 1978 rebellion, is being withdrawn from Shaba. The two Franco/Belgian-trained brigades that will replace them are not viewed as much incentive either. Clearly, there is no easy way out of this morass for U.S. policy makers. Nonetheless, some "signals" (such as the gradual withdrawal of the military program and the less worthwhile economic projects—as Congress has already indicated) might be sent out to the Zairian elite to show that the United States no longer supports the sort of corruption and ineptitude that, in the words of one frustrated former U.S. Government official, has left the country "flat on its back." □

Vietnam Syndrome

(Continued From Front Cover)

"spooks" through a massive layoff of senior personnel. All told, it was the greatest institutional setback for the warfare state since the demobilization ordered by President Eisenhower after the Korean War.

More serious than these institutional reverses, however, was the subjective response. Once all U.S. troops had been withdrawn from Indochina, the nation breathed a collective sigh of relief and adopted a "never again" stance on the use of U.S. troops to control political changes in the Third World. This mood prevailed in 1976, when Congress voted to prohibit U.S. military involvement in Angola, and again a year later when Washington elected to remain on the sidelines during the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict. President Carter, who was elected when the Vietnam Syndrome was at its peak, has generally adhered to the noninterventionist outlook. Although some of his advisers—particularly Zbigniew Brzezinski—called for a military response to particular crises, Carter vetoed direct U.S. involvement in such conflicts as the Zaire upheaval, the Iranian revolution, the Vietnam-China border war and the Nicaraguan civil war. And despite evidence of a turnaround in Administration thinking, the hands-off approach still governs official policy. In a May 1979 speech to the American Association

Michael T. Klare is director of the Project on Militarism and Disarmament of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., and author of a forthcoming book on U.S. arms sales to the Third World.

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of Community and Junior Colleges, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance remarked that, "The use of military force is not, and should not be, a desirable American policy response to the internal politics of other nations."

But for some U.S. policy makers, this dictum imposes an intolerable constraint on U.S. power at a time of growing challenges to American interests abroad. These leaders —representing powerful segments of the military, intelligence and business communities—argue that America's unwillingness to use force in responding to minor threats abroad will only invite more serious and intractable challenges later. The Vietnam Syndrome, in their view, actually fosters instability because it encourages hostile powers to exploit the emerging gaps in the West's global security system. "Worldwide stability is being eroded through the retrenchment of American policy and power," James Schlesinger wrote in *Fortune* after his dismissal as Secretary of Defense in 1976. "This growing instability reflects visible factors such as the deterioration in the military balance, but also, perhaps more immediately, such invisible factors as the altered psychological stance of the United States, a nation apparently withdrawing from the burdens of leadership and power." For these critics, U.S. noninvolvement in Angola, Ethiopia and Iran represents a sign of American weakness rather than a calculated policy of restraint.

Because of his preference for noninvolvement, Carter has become the principal target for such complaints. Despite his apparent success at Camp David, he is often portrayed as "weak" and "indecisive" in responding to foreign crises. "The Administration's response to the multiplying challenges and disorders abroad," George F. Will charged in *Newsweek* recently, "has been a litany of things it will not do: interventions it will not contemplate, bases it will not seek, weapons it will not build. Its policy has been symbolized by two aircraft carriers, the one Carter vetoed and the one he changed his mind about sending toward the Persian Gulf." The President's so-called "turn the other cheek" policy has also been the topic of frequent attacks by leaders of both major parties. Senator Howard Baker, for instance, has charged that Carter's failure to defend the Shah of Iran and other U.S. clients "invites the interpretation that we do not have the will or the resolve to react under any circumstances." And in an extraordinary 1979 address to the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, a formation of cold warriors within the Democratic Party, Senator Henry Jackson charged that the Administration's placidity in the face of growing Soviet belligerence has "the mark of appeasement."

These attacks culminated in March 1979 with a special issue of *Business Week* on "The Decline of U.S. Power," which featured a dramatic picture of the Statue of Liberty in tears. Arguing that since Vietnam the United States "has been buffeted by an unnerving series of shocks that signal an accelerating erosion of power and influence," *Business Week*'s editors called for a revitalized military capacity to protect U.S. interests abroad. The *Business Week* issue was particularly significant because it constituted a rare public airing of the intense policy debate which has gripped the U.S. business community ever since Vietnam, pitting businessmen who felt that America's overseas interests could be adequately protected without recourse to military action against those who maintained that intervention must always be considered the "final solution" to America's political-economic problems abroad. The former group, which I have chosen to call the "Traders," argues that by expanding U.S. trade relations with Third World governments, America could play a sort of global managerial role in spite of continued ideological conflict with some regimes. The latter group, which I choose to call the "Prussians," insists that as the world becomes more turbulent and chaotic, America must use its military clout to prevent Third World upstarts from upsetting the global economic applecart.

For the most part, the participants in this struggle prefer to conduct their battles in seclusion—in corporate board rooms, private clubs and exclusive Washington restaurants. Because the debate revolves around the underpinnings of American power, and because it is simply not possible to expose the inner workings of elite decision making to public scrutiny (it is not proper, for instance, to tell a Congressional subcommittee that Cuban intervention in Angola is really good for America because it assures stability in Gulf Oil's Cabinda field), this struggle tends to be couched in deceptive rhetoric when conducted in public.

The most common expression of the Trader-Prussian schism is the debate over the "Soviet threat." Because data on Soviet military strength are subject to a wide range of interpretations, disputes over the size and character of Soviet capabilities are often used as stand-ins for the more profound contest over imperial policy. While both sides recognize that it is unlikely that Moscow would ever be foolhardy enough to threaten any *really* critical American interests, such as oil (despite all the talk of Soviet intervention in the Middle East, Moscow has been very very careful to avoid any action that could be interpreted as a threat to Western oil supplies), the Prussians argue that the mere existence of large Soviet forces might encourage maverick Third World governments to be more obstinate in their dealings with the West than they would be otherwise. Thus, when outgoing Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger warned in August that the apparent "preponderance of Soviet power" in the Middle East increases Moscow's capacity for "influence and subversion" of the West's oil supplies, insiders understood that it wasn't Moscow he was worried about but rather the growing independence of the Middle Eastern oil powers. And when he called for a beefed-up American presence to discourage Soviet adventures in that area, what he really meant was that we must have the capacity to crush any indigenous challenges to U.S. interests.

This same interplay between the "Soviet threat" dispute and the deeper foreign policy struggle has arisen in the SALT debate. Although most of the discussion has focused on such questions as the relative size of the superpowers' arsenals and the verifiability of the proposed treaty, the underlying debate concerns the perception of power insofar as it affects America's capacity to dominate the Western

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world. Thus, while no one really doubts that America can continue to deter any conceivable Soviet assault, critics argue that the *appearance* of superior Soviet power may act as a constraint on our capacity to discipline errant regimes abroad. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that pro- and anti-SALT Senators are moving toward a compromise that will involve a massive expansion of America's "general purpose" forces—i.e., forces intended for intervention and other nonnuclear contingencies.

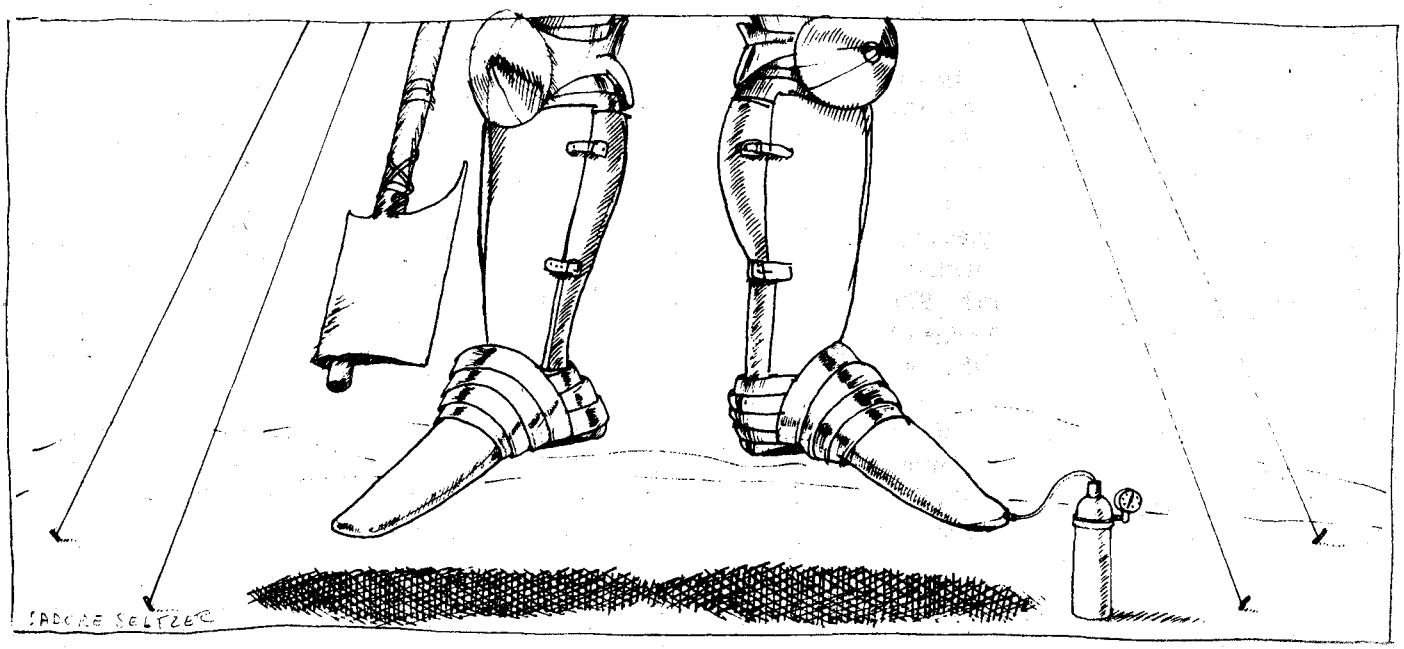
The debate over renewed interventionism has also arisen in recent discussions of the Vietnam War itself. While most Americans still believe that we were right to pull U.S. troops out of Indochina, many "realist" intellectuals now argue that we would be better off (i.e., no "boat people," no Cambodia conflict, etc.) if we had stuck it out in Vietnam and demonstrated our "resolve" to protect U.S. interests. Needless to say, it follows from this logic that if we were right to stay in Vietnam in the first place, we will be even more right to intervene the *next time* a Vietnam-type situation arises abroad.

As these debates unfolded, both sides have demonstrated assorted strengths and weaknesses. By choosing early to support Jimmy Carter in 1976, the Traders succeeded in placing some of their top leaders in high-level Administration posts. The Prussians, on the other hand, have proved adept at manipulating public opinion and at using the "Soviet threat" hysteria to undermine Administration policies. And while the Traders have worked wonders at Camp David and in other secluded diplomatic arenas, the inherent *exclusivity* of their approach (relying, as it does, on secret "understandings" between nominal antagonists) leaves them vulnerable to charges of "appeasement"—or at least of procrastination in the face of growing danger. As a result, the Traders have gradually lost ground over the past year and resistance to intervention (at least in elite circles) has significantly diminished.

This trend was already evident in January, when the Traders suffered a particularly crushing blow: the collapse of the Pahlevi dynasty in Iran. With the Shah no longer available to serve as a surrogate gendarme in the Persian Gulf, the Nixon Doctrine evaporated overnight, and, with it, a major prop of the noninterventionist position. Although most experts agreed that there was little Washington could do to save the Shah, the very absence of any meaningful options was cited as proof of American "impotence."

After the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, the shift of top U.S. policy makers toward a new consensus on the use of military force to protect "vital" U.S. interests abroad became apparent. The new outlook was unveiled on February 26, when the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Energy both announced that the United States would use force if necessary to protect its energy supplies in the Persian Gulf area. Appearing on *Face the Nation*, Defense Secretary Harold Brown asserted that Middle Eastern oil supplies are "clearly part of our vital interests," and that "in the protection of those vital interests we'll take any action that's appropriate, including the use of military force." On the same day, then Energy Secretary Schlesinger told reporters from *The New York Times* that, "The United States has vital interests in the Persian Gulf. The United States must move in such a way that it protects those interests, even if that involves the use of military strength or of military presence."

President Carter backed up these statements with a dramatic flexing of U.S. military muscle during the Yemen crisis of last March. Although the origins of the crisis are steeped in tribal animosities and the fighting was confined to a narrow border area, Carter chose to elevate the Yemen conflict into a major East-West confrontation involving America's "vital interests." Arguing that the South Yemeni attack on North Yemen constituted an indirect threat to Saudi Arabia—and hence to American oil supplies—the White House announced emergency measures designed to prevent any further aggression by the Soviet-armed Southerners. Elements of the 82nd Airborne Division (America's



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standby intervention force) were placed on alert, and the aircraft carrier *Constellation* was ordered to the Arabian Peninsula. Fortunately, the crisis subsided once Arab League negotiators worked out a cease-fire, but it could easily have escalated into something far more serious: according to Jim Hoagland of *The Washington Post*, the White House was prepared to authorize the carrier's eighty-five warplanes to engage in combat if Soviet or Cuban pilots stationed in South Yemen joined the conflict.

The Brown-Schlesinger statements of February 26, coupled with Carter's muscle-flexing over Yemen, have been cited by observers both inside and outside the Administration as proof that official Washington has now recovered from the Vietnam Syndrome. "This country went through a very deep philosophical-cultural crisis as a result of the war in Vietnam," national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski acknowledged in April, but "it is now emerging from that crisis." The Administration's response to Yemen, he noted, "signaled to others that we will use force when necessary to protect our important interests."

The events in Iran and Yemen also had a big impact in Congress. "The tide that swept back U.S. intervention in Vietnam, Cambodia and Angola could now be turning the other way," *The Washington Post* reported in June. "Strong pressures are beginning to build up that could pave the way for a return to a more interventionist policy, based on military presence, to guarantee U.S. access to foreign energy supplies." And in a comment that captures the mood of many in Congress, Senator Sam Nunn noted recently that "I'd rather flex our muscles a little bit on a weekly basis than have to resort to a great display of force at some very high level of danger."

In response to these pressures, the Administration has announced creation of a "Unilateral Corps" for intervention in the Middle East. The Unilateral Corps—so-called because it would be independent of NATO and thus available for unilateral action by the United States—will consist of about 100,000 troops drawn from existing Army, Air Force and Marine units, including the elite 82nd Airborne Division. Once organized, the Unilateral Corps will be available, on very short notice, for rapid deployment to distant trouble spots such as the Persian Gulf. And in his Cuba speech of October 1, President Carter promised a further expansion of U.S. conventional war forces plus stepped-up U.S. efforts to combat "Soviet-Cuban military activism in the Third World."

At this point, it is impossible to predict when, and under what circumstances, the Unilateral Corps will be ordered into action. Several scenarios have, however, received wide attention in the military press: occupation of Saudi oilfields to prevent their takeover by radical Arab forces; naval action in the Persian Gulf to protect oil tankers from attacks by Palestinian commandos; defense of North Yemen or Oman in the event of a South Yemeni invasion, and reprisals against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi following Libyan-backed terrorist raids elsewhere. Whether or not any of these particular scenarios is played out is, of course, beside the point. What matters is that top U.S. policy makers are apparently committed to the use of military force in the event that critical U.S. interests are threatened abroad.

Such action—if and when it comes—will not, however, be a replay of Vietnam. U.S. war planners now have to contend with many constraints not present in the 1960s. First and foremost is the memory of the antiwar movement, which argues against a prolonged counterinsurgency war with daily footage of American corpses being flown back home. Economics also plays a role: Vietnam was an extravagant, fuel-intensive war which could not be repeated at today's oil prices without bankrupting the Treasury. And the runaway arms trade has profoundly altered the international military environment: whereas Vietnamese guerrillas were armed with relatively primitive infantry weapons, potential adversaries in the Middle East and Africa are armed with the latest French, Russian and American combat systems. All this means that any future intervention will have to be fought with much more precision, speed and ferocity than anything we have ever seen.

The future "Vietnams" will diverge from the original in another critical respect: the character of the rationalizations used to justify the war. Whereas the Indochina conflict was essentially (if unconvincingly) justified on the basis of "containment"—i.e., that stopping the Vietcong was necessary to block further Soviet "expansion" into the Third World—any future interventions will be justified on more pragmatic grounds. U.S. leaders recognize that the American public is far more concerned with inflation and the energy crisis than it is with convoluted cold-war strategems. They believe, therefore, that the next Vietnams will have to be salable in crass materialistic terms: intervention is necessary, they will argue, to insure a steady flow of oil to the local gas pumps. There is also a danger of what Prof. Richard Falk of Princeton University calls "humanitarian interventions"—i.e., Entebbe-type raids to free civilian hostages or campaigns to topple such troublesome despots as, say, Colonel Qaddafi or the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Whether or not the American public will swallow such justifications remains to be seen. There are still many prominent leaders who can be counted on to oppose military intervention no matter how it may be disguised, and the peace movement, though quiescent, is capable of fairly rapid mobilization. But the advocates of intervention clearly believe that most of the public's residual antiwar sentiment has been melted away, and that with an intensified propaganda campaign the Vietnam Syndrome can be extinguished completely. When, and if, they conclude that they've succeeded, the appearance—in battle—of the Unilateral Corps will probably not be long in coming. Thus, all of us who worked together to stop the Vietnam War, and all those who believe in seeking peaceful solutions to the world's problems, have an immense responsibility to challenge the notion that intervention is in the public interest, and to advise Washington—as loudly as possible—that any repeat of Vietnam will be met with instantaneous and unremitting opposition. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Letters From Incongruent Worlds

PHILIP STEVICK

LETTERS: A Novel. *By John Barth. G.P. Putnam's Sons. 851 pp. $16.95.*

One of the great sources of energy in the fiction of John Barth has been his fondness for the early fiction of the eighteenth century and before. He has taken seriously the cultural climate within which myths of terminality flourish; his own memorable phrase for an appropriate literature for the present time is "the literature of exhaustion." Yet he has pursued a fiction that, sometimes implicitly, sometimes quite explicitly, in a parodic or imitative way, emulates the possibilities of the distant past: its "type" characters, its digressive, "nonlinear" movement, its oral affinities, its verbal energy, its sheer joy in the act of telling. Now, some ten years after *Giles Goat Boy*, his last full-length fiction, Barth returns again to an early form, the epistolary novel, or, as the full title, which he arranges anagrammatically, puts it, "An old time epistolary novel by seven fictitious drolls & dreamers each of which imagines himself factual."

Of course it is an old-time epistolary novel and it isn't. Old-time epistolary novels, at least as Richardson and Laclos wrote them, develop an almost embarrassing intimacy, so that the reader is placed in the position of voyeur, reading not merely a story but letters, intimacies, revelations not intended for our eyes. They develop plots which are at once simple and astoundingly intricate, the summarizable action being rather thin while the interaction of all the confessions, concealments, frustrated wills, insidious plots and personal humiliations make, on the contrary, fabrics of extraordinary complexity. The result is that claustrophobic, steamy atmosphere that readers of Richardson have either reveled in or complained about for two centuries. The letters of Barth's correspondents, instead, are highly stylized, self-conscious, rather distant, rarely carrying that diary intimacy of early epistolary fiction. And, rather than writing to one another their views of the developing events of an intimately shared situation, the correspondents, for the most part separated from one another in space, sometimes in time, write, as often as not, to themselves, to a dead father or an unborn child, to John Barth. What does make the book seem legitimately old-fashioned is its extraordinary expansiveness, its fascination with the dodges and concealments, the assertions and the posturings of self-presentation, its tendency to allow the correspondents to puff themselves into self-created myths. It is old-fashioned as well in the kind of range which the form permits. As with those distant prototypes, the correspondents describe the minutiae of their lives, render conversation, protest, apologize, speculate, hallucinate, analyze, classify and hypnotize themselves with their own ritual incantations.

In a novel that takes many risks, the identity of the correspondents is the biggest risk of all. They are all figures from Barth's previous fiction: Todd Andrews of *The Floating Opera*, Jacob Horner of *The End of the Road*, A.B. Cook of *The Sot-Weed Factor*, and so on. It is a choice that seems, at first, amazingly hubristic, as if Barth assumed that any reader of *Letters* would know his previous works, well enough, at least, to remember those earlier characters. Barth does protest, within the text, that a knowledge of those earlier figures is not necessary; in fact he, Barth, barely remembers them himself. Yet, even though the letters generate their own energy and the correspondents develop their own lives, the choice of the correspondents still retains a coterie effect and the reader who encounters Jacob Horner for the first time will surely have difficulty making much sense of the Remobilization Farm at which he is, after all these years, still living. The device does, to be sure, expand two conceits which, now and then, enter the minds of all readers of fiction. The first is that playful act in which one rearranges characters, placing Becky Sharp in *Swann's Way* or Huckleberry Finn in *The Wings of the Dove*. Barth's fictions are very different from one another; and thus characters from each of them, placed in the same work, make a collage which is startling and amusing. The second conceit is that equally playful act in which one imagines the lives of characters after the book is finished: Tom Jones married, Paul Morel grown up. And here too, Barth's choice allows him an eccentric excursion into the implicit sequels of his characters' lives. Two more significant effects of such a choice, however, are the exercise they permit Barth with the fictive and the real (characters ingratiate their way into the book, or deny any interest in becoming a part of the book, all of this in letters to Barth, an author then living in Buffalo, the fictional invention of an author, named Barth, then living in Buffalo), and the exercise they permit Barth with history, which is, ultimately, the "subject" of the novel.

Horner, for example, takes the anniversary view of history. On a given date, say September 4, the search for Bishop Pike was abandoned, Anton Bruckner was born, as was F. Scott Fitzgerald, Geronimo surrendered for the second time and Harry Truman inaugurated transcontinental television with an address to the San Francisco Peace Conference. A.B. Cook takes an eyewitness view: he knows the participants in the great events he relates, their inadvertent words as well as their public pronouncements, and the bawds and miscreants who affect the course of historical events. Todd Andrews looks for pattern: temporal and numerological correspondences. And Lady Amherst unites an obsessive chronicle of her many-phased love affair with a version of social history. All of these and more Barth combines in the last two pages of the novel, his "envoi." With the date in disquieting quotation marks, "'Sunday, September 14, 1969'" (that date, Barth tells us, is typed on October 5, 1978), he begins to address the reader, groping for a sense of what "now" means. "Now" means the popularity of President Carter in the polls, the Dow Jones average. "Now" means Barth's location, his busy work, the weather, his yawns and shivers. "Now" means a

Philip Stevick has edited Anti-Story: An Anthology of Experimental Fiction *(The Free Press).*

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newly discovered C.I.A. plot and, at the same time, a communal national celebration. "Now" for the reader, of course, is the date on which he reads those last two pages. And "now" is the date on which President McKinley died, McClellan defeated Lee at South Mountain and Francis Scott Key observed that the flag was still there.

It is, in its way, an extraordinary exercise in intersecting perspectives, intersecting rhetorics, intersecting ways of organizing the world, to bring together the unregenerate nihilism of Horner with the eupeptic observations of Lady Amherst. Although I can think of many works, historical and fictional, that treat history encyclopedically, reaching for range, scope and inclusiveness, I can think of no other work that seeks to bring together jingoism and detachment, the eyewitness view and the distant generalization, the computerized and the humane, the sensuous and the chaste, the compulsively gossipy and the bored, the affectionate and the cynical. It is a book that confirms one's conviction that, for pure talent, the ability to do anything with words, nobody is better than Barth. But the rhythms of *Letters* tend to overwhelm. That old-fashioned epistolary novel immersed us in the continuing lives of its correspondents, like an afternoon soap, and its duration seemed somehow appropriate to the intimacy of its experience. Barth's book, on the other hand, does not invite us to enter a world: there are seven different and incongruent worlds. It does not invite us to enter the chess game of moves and countermoves that the older form provided, because the correspondents rarely interact or, when they do, they generally interact only perfunctorily.

Nathanael West once complained that he had no prospects of finding "rooters" for the kind of fiction he wrote. Barth, on the contrary, has no lack of rooters, readers who have known both the extension of fictional form that he can effect and the extraordinary human power with which he can charge his baroque fictional games. Energetic, talented, as much a virtuoso as ever, Barth, in this fiction, will nevertheless strike readers who are trying to care about the vicissitudes of the fourth phase of the affair between Lady Amherst and Ambrose Mensch as being, in crucial places, fatiguing. Implicitly concerned with the middle of life—the author's, his characters', everybody's—his novel gathers elements from his brilliant career into a form unlike anything before it. But in the process he gives his drolls and dreamers more weight than they can bear. □

OF SILENCE

One morning the sun rises
over trees hazed by smoke
from a campfire. Next day,
next week, willows thick
beside the stream move
only from the sleek bodies
of deer.
Or maybe a hawk soars
and falls at midday
high above stones
you've ringed a space with
on some hillside.
That is how it happens. All at once
one day your mouth goes empty
as September birds nests,
and you walk off
into silence as into a lake
at midnight. Leaves bend
in the wind like questions,
like names.

Wayne Dodd

How Stoned Were You?

GENE LYONS

THE GREAT SHARK HUNT. *By Hunter S. Thompson. Summit Books. 589 pp. $14.95.*

As I write, Raoul Duke is standing blindfolded in front of an Iranian firing squad, haggling over the bribe he is offering. For *Doonesbury*'s sake, I hope those atavistic waterheads grease the twisted little bugger; he hasn't been funny for months now. We would all be better off without him. Like Hunter S. Thompson's journalistic style, Uncle Duke has grown predictable. If he keeps it up, Gary Trudeau will end up as easy to imitate as Thompson himself, which would be a shame. Most of us can enjoy our morning coffee without Gonzo journalism; *Doonesbury*, however, is something to look forward to.

Perhaps that is a harsher way to put it than Thompson's work deserves. Many people I respect consider *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* an American classic. Certainly parts of it are very funny in a deranged sort of way, mostly the parts that would fit into a George Carlin monologue under the aegis of "How stoned were you?" "I was so ripped I drove a red Cadillac convertible through an airport fence and across the runway to catch a plane." That kind of thing. I shall not masquerade as a grave literary moralist and deny that Thompson can make me laugh, nor that he knows more about Americans and the national condition than many of his sterner and more responsible colleagues in the press.

Now then. Thompson never turns down a chance at a digression or an irrelevant aside, so why should I? So before getting off on why I don't think you ought to buy his book, I'm going out to the kitchen for another monster hit of stone-black Maxwell House to help keep my sinuses clear and stimulate the associative centers of my left brain. It's only 10:30 A.M. and my upper lip is already sweating like Dick Nixon's in the Quemoy-Matsu debates back in 1960 when Thompson was doing straight stuff on Latin America for the *National Observer*, good stuff at that. But wait. That's 1962. In 1960, Thompson claims he was a detective in Oakland or one or the other of those hideous, doomed California places. Oh Jaysus, now I've digressed so long I've got to head for the john *before* pouring the coffee.

I think I was saying that Thompson can sometimes make me laugh. If the last paragraph does anything for you other than make you grind your teeth, maybe he can make you laugh too, although his habits are somewhat more colorful than my own. To hear him tell it, Thompson not only goes in for a kind of "Even-as-I-write-Dear-Mother-Mr.-B.-has-his-hand-up-my-skirt-What-am-I-to-do?" brand of bogus spontaneity I thought Henry Fielding laughed out of existence with *Shamela* (1741), but claims to ingest enough dope of several kinds while on assignment or at his typewriter to induce delusions in an entire herd of California gray whales. Just about the only way of taking him seriously is as an updated Western

Gene Lyons lives in Little Rock, Arkansas. He has written for Harper's, The New York Review of Books, Texas Monthly *and other magazines.*

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humorist, a teller of tall tales and outrageous whoppers, *Rolling Stone*'s own Mike Fink. But that is not all of it. My own laughter at Thompson's carryings-on is usually uneasy, since it proceeds from what is most self-indulgent and unattractive about my generation's response to the Vietnam era, and the more Gonzo journalism one reads, the fewer the laughs.

For one thing, the man repeats himself shamelessly, in the process killing off words in the fashion of any Hollywood promo man. Besides *waterhead*, *atavistic*, *twisted* and *bugger* from my second sentence above, other verbal casualties include: *strange*, *weird*, *heinous*—as in the "heinous culture shock" sustained by an English visitor to the Kentucky Derby—*hideous*, *doomed*, *mad*, *madness*, *crazed*, *lunacy*, *vicious*, *gibberish*—usually in romantic praise of his own style—*savage*, and the ever-popular *fascist*.

"[Martin] Bormann was the Tex [Charles] Colson of his time," begins one paragraph more or less typical of Thompson's political analysis of Watergate; and here he may also be found equating Richard Nixon with Adolf Hitler. Elsewhere, he calls Nixon "the most powerful political leader in the history of the world, more powerful than Augustus Caesar when he had his act rolling full bore." He does not venture an opinion as to whether the Roman Emperor could have been brought to his knees by newspaper reporters and an elected committee, had he faced such adversaries, but I think you get the picture. America is the world, and the world began about 1959, so far as the eldest members of our tribe can determine. All the rest is myth and legend, a continuous present of two-dimensional parables in which fact and value yield to the imperatives of adolescent self-dramatization. Thus the assassination of John F. Kennedy is Noah's flood and modern history commenced at the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1968 when twisted, atavistic fascist demiurges seized control of that world. "Chicago," Thompson writes, "this vicious, stinking zoo, this mean-grinning, Mace-smelling boneyard of a city; an elegant rockpile monument to everything cruel and stupid and corrupt in the human spirit." Despite the ministrations of St. George McGovern and Jimmy the Apostle (Thompson was an early adept), and despite Watergate, the forces of darkness remain in control.

I do not wish to be understood as making light of those sad events; quite the opposite. But I'll take Mike Royko on Chicago—or better, Dreiser, Wright, Bellow, Farrell or Mark Smith—every time over Chicken Little. Political melodrama of the Thompson variety proceeds from a particularly perverse sentimentality; the man predicts cataclysm when he is not even expecting rain. The real harmfulness of such bogus melodrama, as George Orwell pointed out, is that persons who take it seriously are usually converted to the opposite persuasion at the first hard knock of reality.

Consider the likely effect upon readers of "Strange Rumblings in Aztlan," first published in *Rolling Stone* after the 1971 riots in the East Los Angeles barrio which followed the Sheriff's Department killing of journalist Reuben Salazar. "Aztlan" is defined as

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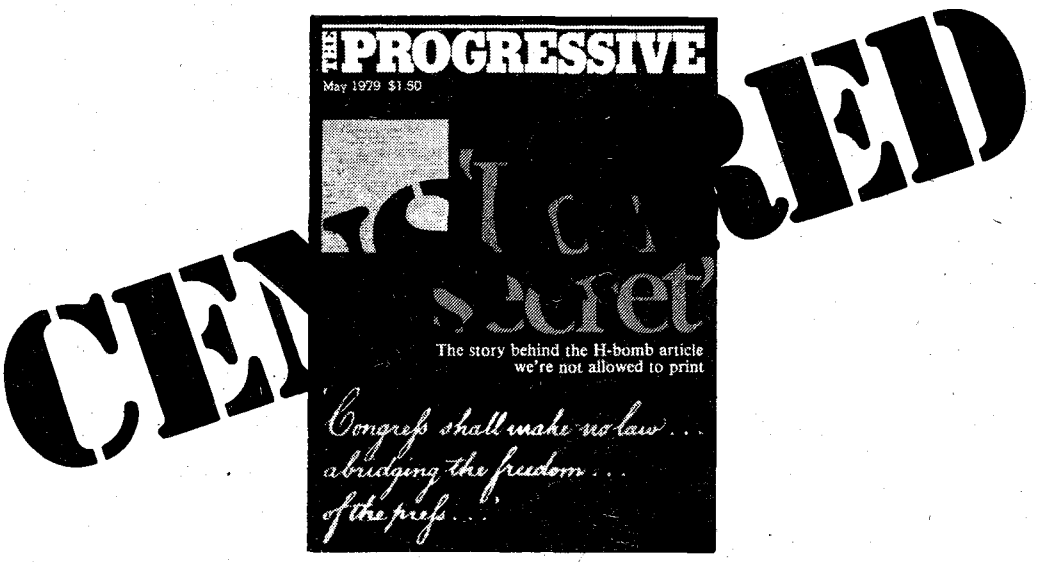
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> came under the yoke of Gringo occupation troops more than 100 years ago, when "vendido politicians in Mexico City sold out to the US" in order to call off the invasion that Gringo history books refer to as the "Mexican-American War." (Davy Crockett, Remember the Alamo, etc.)
>
> As a result of this war, the US government was ceded about half of what was then the Mexican nation. This territory was eventually broken up into what is now the states [*sic*] of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and the southern half of California.

This is not only comic-book history but as most readers of *The Nation* will recognize, wildly inaccurate comic-book history at that. Davy Crockett and the Alamo, as one hopes *Rolling Stone* readers who know their Disney will recall, were the symbols of the war for Texas independence. The "vendido politician" in question was one Santa Anna, not one of Mexico's more admirable bandit generals, and the land grabbed in the Mexican-American War ten years later very likely had a smaller percentage of Spanish-speaking persons than it has now, particularly if one counts the illegals, who, like the ancestors of virtually all of the Chicanos in East L.A., are voting with their feet. Then too there was the Gadsden Purchase some years later. But why go on?

My point is not to mock the grievances of the Chicano population, which are real. But what is the likely effect upon *Rolling Stone* readers of the following description of the *batos locos* ("street crazies") who, Thompson says, "have nothing to lose except their hostility and a vast sense of doom and boredom with the world as they know it"?

> Along with the wine, they eat Seconal —which is massively available in the barrio, and also cheap: a buck or so for a rack of five reds, enough to fuck *anybody* up. Seconal is one of the few drugs on the market (legal or otherwise) that is flat guaranteed to turn you *mean*. Especially with wine on the side and a few "whites," bennies, for a chaser. This is the kind of diet that makes a man want to go out and stomp people . . . the only other people I've ever seen heavily into the red/white/wine diet were the Hell's Angels.

Terrific. In other words: stay the hell *out* of East L.A. And even if you won't say so out loud in polite company, hope that the Sheriff's Department keeps the street crazies *in*.

Then there is the following Gonzo version of the riot itself:

> . . . when fighting broke out between a handful of Chicanos and jittery cops [at a political rally], nearly a thousand young *batos locos* reacted by making a frontal assault on the cop headquarters with rocks, bottles, clubs, bricks and everything else they could find. The cops withstood the attack for about an hour, then swarmed out of the place with a stunning show of force that included firing deadly buckshot balls out of 12-gauge shotguns straight into the crowd. The attackers fled through the backstreets to Whittier Boulevard, and trashed the street again. The cops pursued, firing shotguns and pistols at point blank range. After two hours of street warfare, the toll was one dead, 30 serious injuries and a little less than a half million dollars' worth of damage—including 78 burned and battered police cars.

He does not say who killed that one dead person or how he died; neither does he tell us how many of the injured were police, how many rioters, and how many "others." As usual, Thompson is barely interested in facts, assuming that the prejudices of his readers will lead them to the desired conclusion. But the good Doctor claims to know about guns —one of his amusements, described elsewhere, is getting high and walking naked around his Aspen property at night plinking with a .44 magnum pistol. Surely then he knows that 12-gauge "buckshot," fired into a crowd at anything up to fifty yards, would result in wholesale slaughter. The effect upon human flesh of point-blank shooting of anything all the way down to a No. 9 dove load from a 12-gauge scatter gun would better be described in the *National Enquirer* than here; nor are .38 police specials and .357 magnum handguns very much less destructive. I don't really *know* what happened that day. But I know that what Hunter Thompson says took place did not happen, could not have happened without a massive death toll. Exaggeration for comic effect is one thing. Lying to a mass audience of generally credulous *Rolling Stone* readers is another, particularly since Thompson is betrayed by his tone: he loves it, all of it, and no

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more expects fascism in the United States than he expects the Second Coming. The last and most recent essay in *The Great Shark Hunt*, published originally last year, is about Muhammad Ali and Leon Spinks, which is just about right. Now *there* is a subject in need of comic exaggeration. □

The City in the Country

RICHARD LINGEMAN

GLORIA MUNDI. *By Eleanor Clark. Pantheon Books. 214 pp. $8.95.*

At the opening of Eleanor Clark's novel, we see real estate speculator Jim Pace hovering over Boonton, Vermont, in his company plane, eyeing the hilly landscape below as a condor eyes his dinner. Contemplating the rural New England domain he will soon despoil—"Room there for the biggest ski area in the world, the eastern U.S. anyway"—Pace recalls that Brit Horton, one of the holdout landowners, had befriended him as a dirt-poor boy growing up in Boonton, to which he has recently returned after fifteen lucrative but legally hazardous years playing monopoly in Atlantic City. Indeed, Brit loaned him the $50 with which he bought his first parcel of land at the age of 16.

This patch of Vermont in Eleanor Clark's establishing shot is thoroughly contemporary—a land dotted with weekend houses, little villages with discos and trailer camps, ski lodges owned by Japanese consortia (Jim Pace has OPEC money), old farms with their sugarbush groves, and infestations of tourists pursuing the "fo-lidge" in the fall. In addition to the tourists, there are other contemporary spinoffs seeking other things: "Practically everybody in Vermont just then [was] looking for something—truth, identity, ripoffs, drug deals, lost dogs, new mates, carpentry jobs, socio-political this and that." Boonton itself appears to have almost as many exotic Eastern cults in residence as New York City. In that light, Jim Pace seems a refreshingly ordinary American type—local boy made good, real estate boomer in the classic mold. He has, to be sure, intentions of bilking his own hometown folks out of their scenery and their money, although he fancies he offers them the boomer's usual package deal in return—jobs, tourists, money, "progress."

A few of the locals resist Pace's vision, notably Brit Horton, who won't sell that parcel because he loves the land, which goes back in his family to 1820. Brit is no nobleman of the soil, however; nor is *Gloria Mundi* an environmental novel (if there is such a thing, and I hope not). Vermont—or that small section of it on Eleanor Clark's fictional map—is but one contested hill in the battleground of the American soul. But Clark sticks to her little postage stamp of Vermont and a cast of characters who are not calculated to represent a cross section of the U.S.A. circa 1979. Nor does she aim for any grand statements; the approach is comic and casual, and the narrative voice has a controlled garrulity that sounds a little like Faulkner—or maybe like some village gossip—relating the story, stepping into one character's head, then moving on to the next one, as the action requires.

These Vermont folk are little different from city people, and the day of fictional comedy centered around hayseeds sitting on the front porch of the general store saying "I swan" is long gone; America is "rurban" these days, rather than discretely rural or urban, and Clark's subject matter, if not her approach, is a version, with modern mutations, of Michael Lesy's *Wisconsin Death Trip*, a documentary history of tormented country lives in Wisconsin in the 1890s, told through quotations from the local paper and photographs by the town photographer. Eleanor Clark's Vermonters are not canny Yankees but neither are they grotesques or naïve boobs. In *Gloria Mundi*, the boobs come from the city, like the fellow who drove in three weeks ahead of time to avoid the crowds of leaf watchers and demanded angrily of the general-store crowd where the "fo-lidge" was.

The schism here is between the outsiders come to exploit and those people who have ties to Boonton, who value the land and the past—the conservators like Brit Horton and Walt Hodge, the hired man, and even Lem and Hannah Palz, the cultivated couple who escaped to Vermont from the city long before it was fashionable and wrote a book about the simple life that drew flocks of youthful disciples seeking salvation in quilt-making and other vanishing rural crafts. Beyond these harmless people there are other, more sinister types—"the state was crawling with creeps and crooks and phonies of every description." Motorcycle gangs are cruising the area, and one of them swoops off with a willing Mercy Grout (Madge of William Inge's *Picnic* twenty years later) like Huns carrying off a local maiden. They return to the action before long, preceded by a much-abused Mercy.

But in the meantime a horrible crime is slowly working itself through the Boonton consciousness, like a splinter in the bloodstream. Three people—Brit, Hannah and a stranger calling himself John Mason—happen upon the scene of the crime while hiking in the woods. The victims were a young couple, hitchhiking hippies of cloudy provenance. She has been knifed repeatedly around the genitals; he has been knifed also and left tied to a tree, his severed penis in his mouth. While Brit and Hannah fight off their shock, Mason goes berserk, smearing himself with the still-warm blood and shouting verses from the Book of Revelations.

Mason, it turns out, is actually John Philipson, a self-defrocked minister. Back in his home parish of Fenwick, Michigan, Philipson had achieved national prominence participating in the civil rights movement, and he also served as shepherd of the local black sheep, one of whom, Jeff Smith, is a neighbor. Jeff repeatedly rips him off to buy drugs, and Philipson repeatedly offers the other cheek: "Hi, Jeff, let's sit down and have a talk." More successful was Philipson's work with Penny, a strung-out flower child half his age. Lacking the moral nerve to divorce his frumpy and sickly wife, Margo, Philipson, a former Air Force flyer, plots a phony death for himself in a small-plane crash in the wilds of Canada. Awaiting his descending parachute is Penny, and they too eventually end up in Boonton.

So, as it happens, does Margo Philipson, who has, on a whim, embarked on a new life. A local doctor discovers and cures the kidney complaint that has dogged her all her life, while the ministrations of Walt Hodge awaken her slumbering sexuality. When she eventu-

Richard Lingeman is executive editor of The Nation *and author of* Small Town America, *to be published next spring.*

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ally runs into John, she finds it easy to write him off as if he were still dead; after all, he had left *her* for dead all those years of their marriage. She was his hairshirt; he had rejected a beautiful rich girl to marry her in order more humbly to serve the Lord. Margo, of course, did most of the suffering, while John bore the official cross—an all-purpose papier-mâché one suitable for his platitudinous sermons and trendy causes.

Margo Philipson and Hannah Palz are at the heart of the book. Hannah once served as secretary to Leon Trotsky, and the murder scene in the woods triggers fresh brooding over his death. Trotsky had been the rock of her revolutionary faith, the man who "had the stature to make what was happening in Russia look, to some of us anyway, like an aberration by one hateful tyrant (Stalin!)." In her broodings, Hannah rakes over the old bones of the great party split with the Stalinists. Her despair pushes her into incipient alcoholism. Then, Jeff Smith, the motorcycle gangleader, caught in the act of kidnapping Jim Pace (with visions of ransom), shoots and kills Brit Horton. But the proximate cause of Brit's death is the sanctimonious intermeddling of John Philipson, who attempts to prevent Brit from shooting Jeff. When Hannah visits the nice young local boy who was paralyzed for life during the fray, she is shocked out of her *Weltschmerz*. She realizes at last that Trotsky and the world of the 1930s are dead, and a new, not particularly attractive, world is born. It is a world inhabited by a new species, exemplified by the crazy Vietnam vet who is apprehended as the killer of the young couple—"homo insentiens," Hannah labels the new breed. She draws some solace from the past—the classic architectural grace of the courthouse at the trial, the homespun Vermont justice which confounds the ambitious McCarthyite defense lawyer, who tries to smear Hannah with her Trotskyite past. Hannah remembers the time she and Lem stumbled on an 1820s gravesite on one of their walks: "What a mysterious strength it does give, when our past gets through to us. . . ."

Lem and Hannah flee, presumably throwing up their hands at what America has become. Margo goes to Europe, and in the plane with her grandchild, she sees the sunset orchestrating the *gloria mundi* that is wreathing her new life. She thinks there may be somebody she can help when she has to go to work again: "There are lots of things people need. Like food, and clothes. . . . Like books, and trees, and flowers. Like loving somebody, like behaving decently." Thus, Hannah, the disillusioned revolutionary, despairs in a world devoid of the meaning that myth and tragedy once gave it while Margo, resurrected within, seeks salvation through more modest-scale love, hope and charity. John Philipson, the official man of God, finds happiness with the former wealthy girlfriend, now a widow, whom he threw over to marry Margo. For him the author reserves the farthest circle of hell, that of those who cynically despair and acquiesce in evil. "Don't worry, you'll do worse before you're through," he comforts a still shaken Jim Pace, who is feeling mildly guilty over having cheated Brit out of that piece of land by having a professional forger alter the old deed—especially after Brit rescued him when he was being kidnapped. "The world stinks, and we're in it," Philipson adds, in an echo of the line from *The Duchess of Malfi*: "This is hell, and we are in it."

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If not the symbol of the hammer and the sickle, then why not the symbol of the cross and the sickle?

"In the earlier period the common people had had an idea to crystallize upon, the idea of Christian communism."

Page 819
The Outline of History
by H.G. Wells

After the crucifixion of Christ the apostles performed miracles!

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

Bible
The Acts, Chapter 2, Verse 43

The Apostles also practiced communism:

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

Acts 4:32

Did Karl Marx borrow from the Bible?

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet and distribution was made unto every man *according as he had need.*"

Acts, 4:34, 35

"From each according to his ability, to each *according to his need.*"

Karl Marx
"Critique of the Gotha Programme"

God is a communist; otherwise He would not have provided the apostles with the power to perform miracles while they and five thousand converts practiced communism. Thus communism need not necessarily be atheistic but, quite to the contrary, communism is godful.

Since capitalism is dedicated to the containment of communism on a worldwide scale, capitalism is therefore in contradiction to the Bible and therefore opposed to God, or, if you will, godless.

Since the overwhelming majority of Americans have been indoctrinated against communism, they are unwittingly opposed to God.

Since the Roman Catholic Church is the most vociferous opponent of communism on a worldwide scale, it is also unwittingly anti-God.

Christ and Marx

Despite the fact that Karl Marx was an atheist, he and Christ nevertheless had much in common:

1) Both were revolutionaries opposed to the status quo.
2) Both were vilified during their time on earth and both died ignominiously.
3) It is common knowledge that Marx was opposed to the capitalists, or the rich. So was Christ.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Matthew 19:23, 24

4) Both Christ and Marx had compassion for the underdog; Christ for the poor, Marx for the exploited factory workers of his day.
5) It is common knowledge that Marx was opposed to organized religion. So was Christ:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Matthew 6:5, 6

6) Both were humanitarians who believed in the brotherhood of man.
7) Since Marx was opposed to capitalism it follows that he opposed the profit motive. When the wealthy young man approached Christ and asked what he, the young man, should do to become perfect, Christ advised him to sell all his goods and give all the money to the poor and "come follow me." Christ didn't stipulate that the young man withhold a portion of the money for investments, etc. So it is doubtful that Christ believed in the profit motive or the private ownership of property since Christ owned nothing but the clothes on his back.
8) Both Christ and Marx believed in an ultimate society where cooperation would replace the competitive spirit which is the hallmark of dog-eat-dog capitalism.

Christian Communism in a Nutshell "... whenever it ceases to be true that mankind, as a rule, prefer themselves to others and those nearest to them to those more remote, then Communism is the only defensible and practicable form of society and, when that time arrives, will most assuredly be carried into effect. For my own part, not believing in universal selfishness, I have no difficulty in admitting that Communism is now acceptable for the elite of mankind and may become so for the rest."

Representative Government
by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)
English Philosopher

Pray that:

1) The Pope will follow the example of St. Peter and the apostles and embrace godful communism.
2) The Pope will relinquish his billions of dollars for the purpose of feeding, clothing and housing the tens of millions of his impoverished flock in Latin America, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, etc.

Say a prayer of thanks that we are learning to love our enemy, the People's Republic of China by normalizing relations with this godful country of nearly a billion people in an area exceeding 3,000,000 square miles. Pray that the U.S. Establishment, through its representatives in Washington, D.C. will stop bullying the mere 9,000,000 Cubans by lifting the trade embargo against that small godful country of only 42,000 square miles in area.

Suggested Reading

For an analysis of Christ as a revolutionary see *The Outline of History* by H.G. Wells
The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism by George Bernard Shaw
Looking Backward by Edward Bellamy

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Gloria Mundi has persisting moral reverberations, though one can fault it for failures of sympathy. The "nondescript" young couple who are murdered so atrociously are given wastrel parents and their deaths are made meaningless; perhaps by extension, Hannah characterizes the New Left of the 1960s as vacuous. One need not take Hannah's view for the author's nor necessarily disagree with it, to find, in the absence of any character's representing the condemned values, the judgment too sweeping. Similarly, Hannah's chastisement of the Stalinists of her day lacks specificity; after all, both F.D.R. and Jack L. Warner, to name a random sample, were Stalinists of a sort around that time.

Which is perhaps only to say that *Gloria Mundi*, while touching on the political issues of more than one generation, is not a great political novel. Esthetically, the narrative drive is intermittent; Clark indulges in the leisurely divagations of the essayist. Yet within this ramshackle structure lives a tough, humane, discriminating intelligence confronting our sickness of soul; Clark has a deceptive, almost sneaky power of raising her moral points while proceeding in her shaggy narrative. She has taken the winding country roads, the offbeat byway, and, as it often happens, the scenery is more authentic than along the main highway. □

INDIGENOUS MUSIC

NAT HENTOFF

Music has long been one of Joan Baez's lesser obsessions. When she gets invited on a television talk show, for instance, Baez will dutifully discuss a new album and then sing a number or two, but she has really come to slip in some horrifying news about the state of human rights in Vietnam or in our very own prisons. And if she can manage it, despite the glowering producer in the control room, Joan may also direct the host's wavering attention to the naked barbarism involved in the state's taking a life, no matter what the Supreme Court has said on the subject.

None of this is done in the righteous, wintry style of those cause-conjugators who make you feel far too impure to aspire to be their allies (a feeling that is essentially one of great relief). Baez's highly developed sense of irony, particularly concerning herself, makes it difficult for her to be preachy for long. And so, invariably, she will strike a mordant, mocking note that does not dilute the seriousness of her concerns but does illuminate her own vulnerability as an imperfect soldier in the tiny army of the actively nonviolent.

I have known only a few of those absolute pacifists who have chosen to keep testing their principles in "the arena" (as Saul Alinsky used to say). Two of them in particular, A.J. Muste and Joan Baez, have been uncommonly cheerful warriors. Not sappily cheerful, being far too hip to the ways of the world for that, but essentially and even merrily resilient. It may have been more a matter of biochemistry than anything to do with their beliefs, but that quality certainly increased their impact on those who got to know them, if only fleetingly.

Baez, for instance, likes to talk between songs at her concerts; and it is her quick wit, as she briefly refers to what-

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ever malign injustices most concern her at that moment, that makes her audiences take as much delight in her commentary as in the music. (Not that A.J. Muste could do that in a speech; his shrewd radiance manifested itself in smaller groups.)

Still, people would not come to hear the acutely topical sidebars if Baez were not also so glowing a performer. And of course she knows that, which is one reason why, for the first time in her career, Joan is taking voice lessons in the hope of prolonging that career for another fifteen years or so. Like most untrained singers, Joan has abused her voice in the common delusion that singing is a "natural" act. So far, in any case, although some of the higher notes have gone and the vibrancy of yore is not quite as stunningly penetrating, Baez can still be transfixing. Indeed, her sound is warmer now; the 1960s "madonna on the half shell" sometimes cast a bit too remote a light.

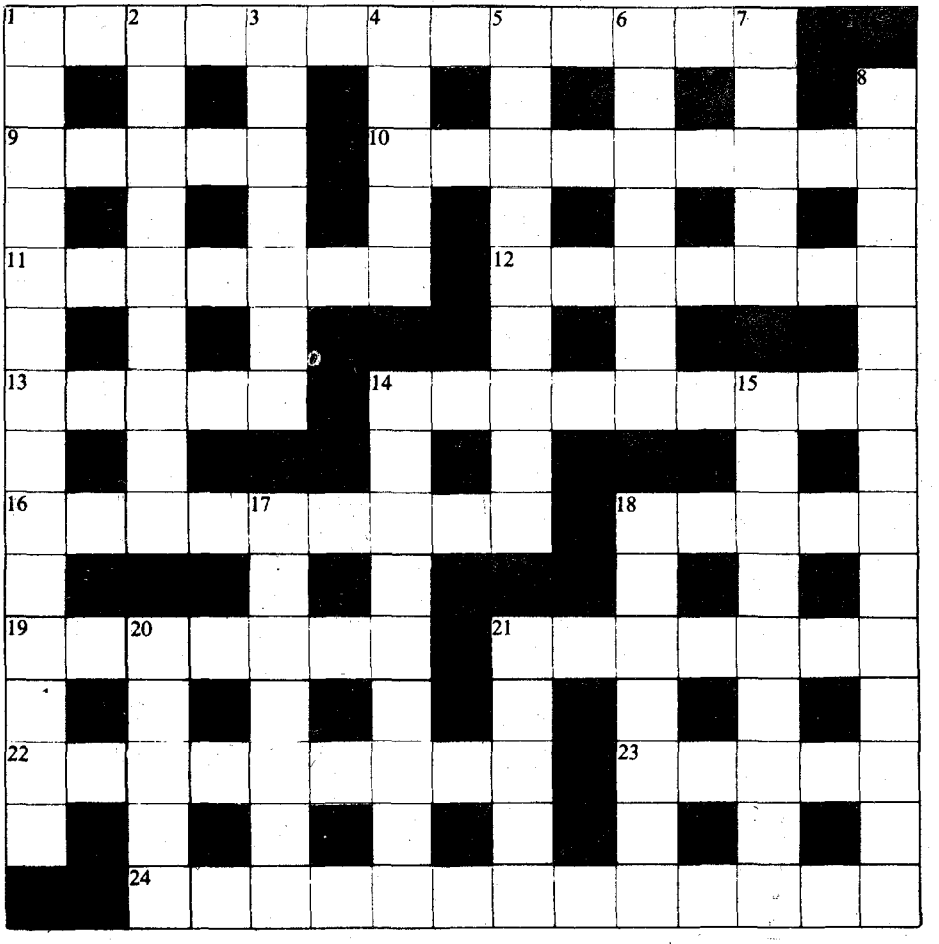
In July of this year, Joan came to New York's Central Park, as part of the Dr. Pepper Music Festival series. She worked all by herself, even declining the ambiguous honor of being introduced by the Mayor of the city. The auditorium, to my surprise, was full. Joan, after all, has not been on the charts for a long time and her natural sound (including acoustic guitar) hardly fits in with the hugely amplified electronic rock that I thought attracted most partakers of such alfresco events.

Baez was in total command of that audience, and clearly, she was enjoying herself. Music may hardly enter her mind off the stand these days, but she's well aware of her force as a performer. And through time, she has become much more flexible. Both in terms of repertory—including more and more songs of the politics of love than of nations—and also in the way she paces herself. She seems to get her rhythms now from her listeners and will instantly choose a number to keep that rhythm going rather than stick to any set plan. And rarely have I seen a performer in so large a place make it seem so intimate. (Maurice Chevalier and Charles Trenet, both of quite another school, also had that skill.)

The "screwed-up, skinny Mexican," as Baez describes herself as a child, has come a far distance. In the world and in herself. To have done it with so much laughter is at least as singular as the sound of her voice. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1791

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 What is a high wave—a dandy example, too? (If you don't get it, it's equally good!) (3,4,2,4)
9 Is a hen necessary for such a cake? (5)
10 Relating to certain theories of heredity, it's a way to fix an essayist on a particular point. (9)
11 It's just a mite annoying! (7)
12 A poetic family to occupy a place at the source. (7)
13 What to do with a dog, if you have little French. (5)
14 Think-tank agenda might not be practical. (9)
16 Packs on backs. (9)
18 It has to be at the front one finds a big bang around a major point. (5)
19 One might be caught off guard so. (7)
21 They might let you in, but get punched in the process. (7)
22 It could be just a tiny alibi as an excuse for not doing something. (9)
23 A Parisian needs it to pronounce "R." (5)
24 Did they designate such going from Maine to Florida? (Possibly served with toast.) (3,3,3,4)

DOWN

1 Standing in for mom and pop? (What goes in "crazy daddy" is!) (2,4,8)
2 City lists arranged according to the rules of usage. (9)
3 and 20 Is it inappropriate as an accompaniment for grand opera? (7,5)
4 Watch for a send-up? (5)
5 Birds make music, with the rest being bad. (9)
6 With the garden, all but the end of the tale is toothless. (7)
7 There's a popular body of knowledge about one, as the flower of France. (5)
8 What Londoners able to accomplish things might have to cut? (Americans might consider it a little hot.) (7,7)
14 Turn to coining and you'll certainly not get well-known. (9)
15 Drawn out musically, it looks like bad notes to us! (9)
17 Personal ending, reflexive? (7)
18 Youngster's answer to "Why see a cub in trouble?" (7)
20 See 3 down
21 Appointment to meet and test the effect a little way. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1790

ACROSS: 1 Dogs in the manger; 9 Clouded; 10 Gaining; 11 Wreath; 12 Investor; 14 Instigates; 15 Brie; 17 Task; 19 Supercargo; 22 Nobleman; 23 Lounge; 25 Tripoli; 26 Unideal; 27 Neat but not gaudy. DOWN: 1 Dick Whittington; 2 Glowers; 3 In detail; 4 Tidy; 5 Engineered; 6 Arisen; 7 Glitter; 8 Roger de Coverley; 13 Naturalist; 16 Scooting; 18 Sabrina; 20 Rondeau; 21 Resorb; 24 Juno.

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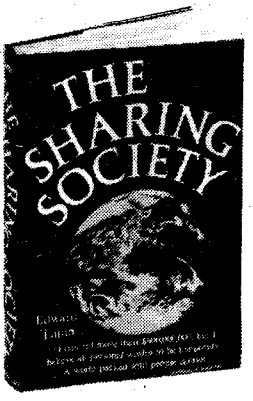

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